

Minenhle Khumalo



Naked Truth

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May all your dreams come to life. May life grant you all that you have always desired!

CHAPTER ONE

Cues IZOLO - DJ Maphorisa

To go heavy or to go light? That is the question. Well, considering I haven't stepped out of the house in two weeks, I think I deserve heavy. Heavy it is.

It takes me a good two hours to apply, apply and apply. By the time I slap on some lipstick, I look like something out of a magazine.

Cover girl stuff!

Now, to raid the closet. What am I even going to wear? This is the part I hate about playing dress-up - looking for the dress to up.

I have the cute pleated skirt I bought a while back. I could pair it with some things highs and a knitted jersey. Who the hell wears a jersey to a club, though? I DO! And I look cute doing it!

Final check. I look amazing!

I grab my bag and head out, requesting an Uber. The driver arrives just as I make it downstairs.

"Looking incredible, Nkosazana," Themba, the security guard, compliments me.

I blush, giving him a twirl. I thank him, blowing a kiss in his direction. He wishes me a good night as I walk out.

I hope the driver isn't one of those talkative ones - I'm not in the mood to hold a conversation right now. Thankfully, he just greets and focuses on the road. The next fifteen minutes feel like a breeze as we make our way to the heart of Sandton. We arrive at the destination. I thank him as I slide out,

giving him a solid 5-star rating. He tells me to be safe before driving off.

Sweet.

I make my way in, a bit of exaggeration to my step. The looks I'm getting tell a story of a hot ghel!

I press the top floor and ride the elevator all the way up. The doors open and I'm welcomed by ear-piercing music.

"Ngingene namaGents estokisisni
Bangbuzukuthi ngephethe malini?

Ngezwa kukhal'uthililili

Ngezwa kukhal'uthililili

Ngingene namaGents estokisisni

Bangbuzukuthi ngephethe malini?

Ngezwa kukhal'uthililili

Bathi asenz'ifilimi

Thililili, thiyiyiyi

Ey bathi asenz'ifilimi

Asenz'ifilimi..."

My eyes move around with intention. We know what we're looking for and we know it's here.

I spot him in the corner, VIP section,

smoking a cigar - his poison.

Back straight, chest out, head high and strong and legs? One in front of the other...

Thank goodness for the squat sessions, my ass is popping! My skirt also lends a hand to the imagination of whoever is behind me.

Our eyes lock; he smirks. He sees me. No, like he sees me!

I walk past the VIP section, towards the back where there's more privacy. I can feel him. He's following me. Probably has that stupid boyish look on his face. Let's see if he'll have that look once I'm done with him...

...

"You're quite the catch," I say, seductively slinking towards him.

He sucks in a breath, smirking in the process, an attempt to hide the fact that I know how to get to him. His eyes travel my body, undressing me, eager to ravish me in one go. I don't want to play this out any longer; I've missed him. Two weeks is a very long time

without his magic hands playing me.

Without wasting any time, I bend down, grab the back of his neck and pull him in for an aggressive kiss. He groans, pulling me to straddle him as he returns the kiss with as much urgency, if not more. As our lips continue to explore each other, I reach below and begin to work his belt. He grunts, helping me do away with his belt. It's not long before his pants reach his ankles and the only thing between us is the thin material of my thong and his briefs.

Forget the other material between us; the most important ones are almost all out of the way. Our lips are still locked, hungrily feeding off of each other. I moan when I feel a sting on my ass. Oh, that's one thing he enjoys doing a lot. It's like he has no regard for my fragile skin at times. But, what daddy wants, daddy can do!

I reach down and take his cock in my hand and begin to stroke him. He's already alive, firm as a column.

"Fuuuuck," he whimpers, in my mouth.

Got him!

His briefs join his pants and I waste no time as I push my thong to the side and slide down the pole. He pulls back. I open my eyes and study his face. His eyes are shut and his lips are twisted. He whispers a young what the fuck as I begin to work him.

I usually say the first round belongs to him; even if he doesn't make me reach the stars here, I know he's definitely going to make up for it.

The feel of our skin getting reacquainted is the best sensation.

...and then it happens, he cries out, eyes still shut, and I feel the searing hot liquid inside of me. He sucks in a breath before crying out again as he makes sure he's emptied all of him in me. I chuckle with satisfaction. Just like that!

I slowly pull my hips back, and as always, he curses as we part. I don't wait for him to open his eyes, I slip into the bathroom to wipe myself. I bring him a warm towel to rid himself of our evidence.

"Fire pussy," he says, as I wipe him.

I giggle. I know.

He pulls me to his lap and attacks my mouth.

"I've missed you," he confesses.

My lips curve up into a smile. I pull back and look into his eyes. He means it, I can tell.

He hardly ever confesses his emotions but when he does, boy, oh boy!

"Did I tell you how beautiful you look tonight?" –I shake my head– "you look breathtaking. You stole the show when you walked in."

"You're such a charmer. Thank you, baby."

"How was home?" he asks.

Home...

That's a subject I don't want to talk about.

"It was good. Mom was happy to see me, I guess." I shrug.

You can never really tell with that woman.

"But I don't want to talk about my trip, I want to talk about you and me... or maybe not talk at all," I add.

His smile reaches his eyes before he pounces on my lips.

I guess we're not talking. I don't mind. I actually prefer it this way.

CHAPTER TWO

Remind me again why I'm doing this? Oh yes, because I like things. I saw this poster online, it looked fascinating, so I emailed them and reserved my spot. But now that I have to go, I don't want to. I should cancel, right? But I can't. It's too last minute and I hate inconveniencing people.

You know what, to let me stop throwing my toys and get ready for this evening. Who knows, I might just have fun. Shrugs! I doubt it but let's see. Optimism.

I have thirty minutes to get ready because the event starts in an hour and it's about a thirty-minute commute to the place. I can do this!

My mother would be so proud of me. Not for going to this thing, no, she would probably disown me for ruining the family like this. Blasphemous. That's the word she would use to describe my actions. And not just tonight's actions.

I meant she would be proud of the fact that I haven't cancelled any of the plans that I've made this year. Yeah, you see, I have a bit of a problem. Or should I say had?

Cancel plans was my middle name. It's not that I don't want to fulfil my plans or promises or rather didn't, I just had issues with, I guess, being out in public. But that's all good and old now. Now we fulfil every plan and every promise and every event and and and...

And true to my word, in thirty minutes I'm done, looking cute. No makeup on but that's all good, right? Yes, because I'm a gorgeous ghel who doesn't need all the added extras! I head up!

I should probably take my car but then again, I want to drink, so I request an Uber and head

out. Themba isn't working tonight, which sucks because I like seeing his handsome face before I make my way out.

I like these drivers that don't talk a lot. I rate them 5 stars, always!

I'm going through my messages. Amongst them is a notification. Daddy sent some go spoil yourself money. He sure does spoil me. A lot. He says he works hard so that I can enjoy the rewards of his great mind and hard-working hands.

I don't complain. I would never.

"I'll be back in a couple of days. Make use of the penthouse, if need be," - that's a text from him.

If need be.

Why would I ever need to spend some time, alone, at the penthouse? Makes no sense.

"See you when you get back," - I respond.

"I love you."

"I love you too," - send.

I love him. I really do. I've loved him from the moment I laid my eyes on him. I know that our relationship might not make it to the

end. Look, I'm a realist. It stings a bit but it is what it is.

We might love each other but there are a couple of obstacles standing in our path that might be a bit too heavy for us to push aside or even jump over.

But all in due time, right?

Yes!

The drive to Braamfontein is a quick twenty five minute drive. I don't know whether I'm at the right place or not, but the location pin I received from the organizers led us here.

The driver drives off leaving me alone in the middle of nowhere. Okay, that's a bit of a stretch; I'm not in the middle of nowhere. I know where I am; I just don't know where I'm supposed to go.

I decide to walk into the restaurant and ask if anyone knows where the location is. Surprisingly I am at the right location. The event that I'm attending, can I even call it an event, is at the back. Far away from prying eyes.

Okay...

Let's see what this evening has in store for us.

CHAPTER THREE

"Welcome to NAKED TRUTH night. Just a few house rules...

One: everything that happens here stays in here.

Two: no pictures, so that means phones off and into the basket.

Three: we don't kiss and tell. Refer to rule one.

Four: be truthful. Naked Truth. Remember!

And lastly, five: let's have a great time."

There's a basket moving around, people are dropping their phones in there. Blind Faith? Trusting much?

Why should we trust these people? Who are they? I only came here to try something new

and fulfil a promise I made. That's it.

The guy next to me tosses his phone into the basket. I scoff. The lady with the basket stands in front of me, holding the basket in front of me. I blankly stare at her. I'm not giving up my phone. What if they want to kidnap us? What if they're going to rape all of us? What if? What if? What if?

I'm good.

"Ma'am, you need to throw your phone in," she says.

"I'll keep it on my person. Thank you." I take a sip of my drink. OJ.

I need to stay sober tonight. I came here with the intention of drinking but seeing that they have tricks, I won't risk it.

She tries to persuade me but I stand my ground. I'll turn it off but I'm not giving it to them. In fact, I'm going to put it on silent qha! What if we need to dial 10111. Never!

She walks away when she realises that I'm not giving in.

I mean, they'll see me if I take a picture, so I don't get it.

"You're quite stubborn," the guy next to me says.

"And you're too trusting." Not trusting, stupid! That's what he is.

He chuckles, "I'm Mathonga, by the way," he says.

Mathonga? Like ancestors? "Yes, like ancestors," he responds.

Oh shit! I need to learn how to keep my thoughts inside my mouth.

I have this thing where I think of something and accidentally say it out loud. Does it qualify as foot in mouth syndrome? I don't know.

"Sorry," I say, a bit embarrassed.

"It's fine, really. A lot of people always wonder."

"Have you ever wondered why they named you that?"

"Not really. It's just a name," He shrugs, "I don't really bother myself with technicalities of such. I'm just grateful to have a name to introduce myself to people. Imagine if I had no name."

I burst into laughter. That was unexpected. Imagine if I had no name. That would be sad. A shame. Are there people out there with no names?

I wonder.

I hope not.

"Ladies and gentlemen, grab a drink, a snack and make yourself comfortable."

My new buddy and I make our way to the snack table band grab a few before finding our seats. I have no idea what this night is about, or what we're about to do but I'm ready. I think.

"Great. Again, welcome to NAKED TRUTH night, a night where all truths are welcomed and encouraged. Think a confessional at a Catholic Church you know, forgive me father for I have sinned. Only I don't have the capacity to pray your sins away nor do I have the capacity to judge you. In fact, neither of us does."

I scoff. We're all going to judge each other the moment we speak our truth.

So we're basically confessing our deepest

secrets. L O L. Naked Truth. I should've known what that meant.

Why would I trust strangers to keep my secrets? Psychology is interesting, huh? But I'm here, so might as well participate. Let's hear what secrets the people around us are keeping. This should be intriguing.

"I hate my wife," the one guy says, "look, don't get me wrong, I love her but I hate her at the same time. If I could, I'd leave her but I doubt I ever will. So I'll spend the rest of my life hating her."

Whoah!

WTF!!!

What the actual fuck!?

Is that even a thing? How does one even get to that point? What happened to them? Are we allowed to ask questions because I would really like to know more?

I'm staring at him, hoping he will give more detail but I guess the rules of the game don't allow us to divulge, which sucks. Big time!

"I cheated on my husband. Well, I'm still cheating on him. With his brother." Oh shit!

We're accessories. We're accessories to cheating. Laaawd! Is it too late to run away? Yes? No? Gosh!

"Hmmmm, I bumped into someone and speed off. Hit and run. The only thing that got damaged was their car, though, thankfully."

What the actual hell!?! Our charge sheet just keeps getting longer and longer.

"Well, I had an abortion and I didn't tell my husband."

Whoah! What in the married people crap is this!?

"My side chick is pregnant. I'm a married father of five."

Jesu!!!

I'm hyperventilating. What the actual fucked up relationships is this!?

That didn't make sense but oh shit!!!

Oh damn. It's my turn now. I don't have secrets. Well, I have one but that's not for the world to hear.

Think, baby, think.

"My parents think I'm in Joburg working on

my career," I say and shrug.

I can feel him staring at me intently. I'm grateful that they don't encourage us to ask each other questions here. Confessing that has me feeling some type of way. I shouldn't have opened up about that to a bunch of strangers. But thankfully, I'm not going to see any one of these people ever again!

"I secretly almost got married without my parent's knowledge but I pulled out right at the end," my buddy says.

I snap my head, looking at him with my eyes popped out. That's worse than my confessional. A whole marriage? This I need answers to.

I'm so in my head asking myself questions that I don't catch the rest of the confessions. I snap back to Earth when the host tells us we're taking a break.

There's dinner and drinks.

My newfound buddy and I grab our plates, dish up and then go find a corner away from prying eyes.

"Marriage?" I ask.

I couldn't hold it in anymore. He chuckles lightly.

"In my defence, I was young and in love. it was two days after we received our matric results and we had been dating since I was in grade 9, so it kind of made sense in our eyes for us to get married before we went to varsity. Anyway, we started it and agreed that we would just go to home affairs, sign and then deal with the repercussions of our actions later. Somewhere between getting ready and moments before signing, I chickened out.

I think we were both relieved. Obviously, it hurt but yeah. I was almost a married man."

The only reason I'm laughing out loud is because of the drama in his voice. I didn't know better I would say he was a drama student.

"Well, I'm kind of glad you didn't get married because now we get to laugh at your should have been wedding slash married life, yes?"

"Go on, laugh at my pain," he grunts.

Don't mind if I do.

"And you? What's your deal?"

Now it's my turn to grunt.

"I'm just a liar but with good reason."

"I'm all ears," he says, sitting up.

"Eat your meal, Mathonga."

"Two things you're being unfair about: one, your name, I don't know it. Two: your confessional, but I'll let that slide if you give me your name."

Well, he's cheap.

"Nkosazana."

"Nice to meet you, Nkosazana."

"Likewise, Mathonga."

CHAPTER FOUR

"I think I might miss you," - the text message reads.

I squint my eyes, trying to make sure that I'm seeing what is actually on the screen.

How do you miss someone you only met last night? But then again, I'm that dope ghel! Everyone I come across always craves my company after meeting me. I'm not being pompous, I'm simply telling the truth.

The Naked Truth!

"I have that effect on a lot of people," - send. Almost immediately, my phone pings.

"I guess I'm not immune to the Nkosazana charm. Can I see you today?"

Hmm. Can HE see me today?

I mean, why not? It's not like I'm going anything worthwhile, right?

"Lunch at Pata Pata?" - I send.

He did mention that he lived in Maboneng and I happen to enjoy the area. It's calm and lively all at the same time. I love what they've done with the place. I think the development of Maboneng has shown us that it's possible to fix a city if we're actually serious about it. If our government along with us, the citizens of the city were to band together, I think we could create wonders.

Imagine a city where you're not scared to just walk down the street; that would be the life. I think in due time, with the hard work put in, this could go from just a pipedream to reality. We just need to put our focus goggles on and get our hands dirty. Maybe I could start a petition or something like that. Would that even work? Do those things even work in our country? Asazi.

"Or I could just cook for you. I make a killer beef stir fry," - he responds.

He just wants to fuck me. Nothing else.

"Text me your location. I'll bring wine."

"Just your beautiful self will suffice," - he texts back.

Charming. Sickening!

Another ping. This one is from daddy.

"A couple more days and I will be with you. I miss you so so much," - his message reads.

"I miss you too, my love. Next time take me with you, please."

"Next time we're going wherever you want. No questions asked. You deserve the world and all it has to offer and I would like to give it to you," - he says.

Who is chopping onions? Have I ever mentioned that daddy gets sentimental and sweet sometimes? It doesn't happen often, as I've mentioned, but when it does, I smile all day long. But we know that the idea of taking a trip is just that, an idea. With his busy schedule and everything else in between, I doubt we would manage to take a trip to the bathroom together.

"I love you. I truly do," - I tell him.

"I know you do. I love you right back. I have

to go. Long day. Enjoy the rest of your day. Spend that money, okay?"

"I sure will! Later!"

I won't spend that money. I spend it, sure, but not all of it. He's always giving me money and I don't know what to do with it. I pay my rent, buy food, and clothes, go out and after all that, I still have change left. A lot of change.

I've started saving some of it for rainy days. I hope I never run into those but this is Earth. This is life. Anything can happen. This is what sucks about living on this stupid Earth; rainy days can seep through your umbrella, no matter how well prepared you are. Life is a lot; it's heavy. We're technically just fighting to stay alive so we can have days of misery and worry about debts. That's the main thing people worry about, DEBT. Imagine if Uncle Bill were to close off everyone's debts and gave us a fresh start. That would be awesome!

Another ping comes through.

Mathonga - "see you soon." He sent his

location.

Alrighty, then. Let's get ready.

I'm doing the bare minimum. No makeup. A maxi dress and flops. They might be Gucci, but they're still flops. I get ready and within forty-five minutes, I'm out.

"So, Nkosazana, you look beyond incredible," Themba says.

Whenever Themba compliments me, I just blush. All the time.

"You should quit your job and become a full-time charmer," I tell him.

"If you employ me, I will quit in a heartbeat." I trust he would. My Uber arrives; I blow him a kiss and I head out. I can't believe I'm going to visit a man that I only met last night. What if he's a serial killer? I was disappointed in him for being so trusting last night and here I am doing the same thing today. This is South Ahh, the capital of human trafficking and I'm being a blind mice.

I send my best friend my live location. She calls immediately.

"Who. Where. When. Why," she says, "oh

and how."

I chuckle. Ever so inquisitive and dramatic.

"Hello to you too, Brenda."

She grunts. She hates that name and I love it because she hates it.

"I hate you. Be safe. Condomise. Don't act like I don't ever reprimand you," she says.

Reprimand me!? For what?

"You're high, perhaps?"

"You only share live location for sex. I know you. I've been under your skin for the past ten years. Give me some credit."

"Oh, so these are your teachings."

"Bitch, bye! Enjoy yourself. I love you. I'll call you every hour until you're done with your sexcapades," she says before hanging up.

I hate her. I love her but I hate her. Now I understand what that married man was saying. I fully get how he feels. I'm caught in the exact same situation, only I don't have to fuck her every other night - thank the heavens!

We arrive in Maboneng and as usual, 5 stars.

I text Mathonga to let him know I'm here. I

greet the security at the door and make myself semi-comfortable on the couch right by the entrance. This building looks secure and like a space I could enjoy living in if I were looking to live next to the vibe.

A few minutes later, Mathonga steps out of the elevator in nothing but a pair of shorts. Holy moly, father forgive me for I am about to sin. He looks smoking, like Peri Peri and a dash of habanera.

Fire!

He smiles and the sweet girl in me stands up. The little hoe in me got excited at seeing a bare footed, topless man but that sweet girl likes the guy that's smiling.

"Nkosazana," he says, smile so wide it reaches his eyes.

"Hey."

He pulls me in for a hug and I don't resist, surprisingly.

"Come through." He has a chat with the security before leading me in.

It's just the two of us in the elevator, which is almost awkward. The tension between us is

strange. It's intense yet comfortable-ish. I can feel him staring at me. It's funny how I wasn't this shy around him last night, yet here I am right now, barely able to keep my breathing in check.

My phone pings just as the elevator pings as well. He leads us to his apartment. 510. It smells heavenly just from the outside.

We step in and I can't help but smile. Not only does it smell good, but it looks just so amazing. His choice of furniture is out of this world.

"Thank you," he says, "my mom chose the furniture. All of it."

I did it again. Foot in mouth.

"Including your bed and bedding?" I find myself asking.

I don't know what I asked that. He chuckles lightly, "Including my bed and bedding," he says.

Hmmmm.

He tells me to make myself while he pours me a drink. OJ. I thank him and lean back into the couch, watching him move around the

kitchen. He reminds me of Daddy, he's poised as he is and he kind of has that demand authority without trying demeanour. Fascinating.

I didn't really get to analyse him last night; we were too into the night to focus on anything else other than the shocking truths people were telling us.

I still don't understand how people were that comfortable telling strangers their secrets.

Weird.

He's tall, got broad shoulders and a big head. His head is big but it's not the kind of big that stands out, you only notice it when you actually look at him. He has a tattoo on his shoulder but I can't read out what it says. He's got a strong back – the, I work out kind of back. And he's got a firm ass. I had to throw that in there.

On the wall is a portrait of him and I assume, his mother. It's cute! I like men that like and love their mothers openly and without shame.

"So, did you enjoy last night?" he asks.

Hmmmm. Small talk. Hate it.

"It was interesting. And you?"

"Well, telling people one of my secrets was fun. I'd do it again."

Oh no! I'd never. Okay, maybe I'd go for the food and ambience. Nothing else. I'd probably have to make up some lie, though, that I'd have to confess.

What would be one secret that would make people gasp after I tell it?

I fucked a goat once.

Yeah, that could be a good one only it doesn't make sense for females. If I was a guy and I confessed to that it would totally make sense but how do I get a goat to, you know... Zero sense.

Next better lie!

We'll think if something.

"You seem like you were into it," I say.

"Yeah, well, I'd been looking for an opportunity to kind of confess my sins. I couldn't exactly tell my parents and my friends would've beat the hell out of me."

"Why?"

"Because we hate cheaters. We don't cheat."

"Why did you cheat on her?"

He shrugs, "She cheated first. I know I could've just walked away from the relationship with my head held high and my body count in tact but I couldn't. I loved her and she hurt me. I needed to hurt her back."

"So you're going to cheat back on anyone that cheats on you," I ask.

I need this to make sense. His reasoning is stupid. Dumb.

"I don't think you're ever going to cheat on me," he says.

Oh... WAAIT. Whaaaat!?

Smooth!

"You don't know me."

He turns off the stove and makes his way towards the couch. He's sitting next to me. His presence is suffocating me. I think it has everything to do with the fact that he's handsome and he could get it!

"Then let's change that fact. Allow me to get to know you."

My stomach churns. This shouldn't be

happening! Daddy is the only one that gets to make me feel this way.

"Mathonga..."

"Nkosazana, I'm not asking you to marry me, although, I probably will in future," -oh Lord, noo! He can't say such- "I'm just asking for the chance to get to know a beautiful woman. I'm asking for the chance to be in your life. Allow me that honour. Please..."

CHAPTER FIVE

"You're right. This is the best stir fry I've ever had," I compliment with my mouth full. I couldn't wait until I swallowed to tell him. We're having stir fry with noodles. Delicious! "I told you, I'm an excellent cook."

"Yeah, yeah, whatever."

He chuckles. I don't want to talk, I just want to eat. It's that damn good! He gets up and makes his way to the kitchen. He comes back with the wok and refills our plates. I'm not complaining.

His phone rings just as he sits back down. The smile on his face grows.

"Mom." Oh, a mommy's boy, perhaps?

"I miss you too. How's the trip? How's Dad?"

he asks.

I'm digging in, indulging in this goodness.

"As long as you're having a good time. Bring me something nice." He bursts into laughter and looks at me.

Okay, that look sends chills down my spine.

"One day, Mom. I promise. Now, go back to your husband before he sulks. I love you."

He hangs up and sighs happily.

"You have a close relationship with your mom?" I ask.

Stupid question considering I just heard them interact.

"Yeah. She's my homie. She and dad. They're just the best," he says.

You can tell that he means it. I love the look on his face as he continues to tell me about his mother and the role that she plays in his life. He is a certified Mama's boy and he doesn't care what people say.

I admire that. I mean, why should guys hide the fact that they're close with their mothers and that they have a good relationship? Makes no sense.

Society just enjoys imposing its wayward beliefs on others. The second you have a different belief then, you can't hang with us!

"And you, are you close with your parents?"

I shrug, "We're okay. We're not homies like you and yours but we're not enemies."

He looks at me with a frown on his face.

"But you guys hang?"

"They're back home. I don't go home a lot but I try to see them when I can. I talk to my dad a lot, though. He's good people."

Just the thought of my dad brings a smile to my face. Sweet man. He isn't your typical traditional dad but he isn't the new school type of dad either. He's in between but I get him. We understand each other.

"Well, dads are a girl's first love, right?"

"So they say. But I wouldn't want to marry someone like my dad," I say.

"Care to elaborate?"

I heave a sigh.

"Why does this feel like naked truth night?"

He chortles, even throwing his head back. Did I mention that he's still topless and dead-ass

gorgeous?

Chilee!

"Only we don't get to be this comfortable and ask questions during that night."

True. I draw in a breath. I hate that he makes me feel comfortable enough to want to actually open up to him. Sucks!

"My dad is great. He's an amazing father and leader in his career. All my life I've known that he's a man and would probably die protecting me, which I love and appreciate," He's always been the perfect example of what or who a father should be, "his only issue, I feel it's an issue, is his inability to stand up to my mom. Now, I'm not saying he's weak, but at some points, you need to man up, especially if you can tell that certain situations are harmful or hurtful to your child."

My mom basically wears the pants when it comes to parenting me, which isn't a bad thing but it's not a good thing either.

"But husbands often side with their wives. It's how marriage works, I think."

"Yeah, kodwa, Mathonga, I don't think your dad would nod his head while your mother tears your dream to shreds."

"Oh..."

"Exactly. Parents often think they know best hence they dictate how we should live our lives but what they're actually doing is trying to right the wrongs they made in their youth days through their kids in the name of 'we don't want you to make the same mistakes we did.'

But how are you supposed to grow and experience life if you are not allowed to make mistakes? Isn't the beauty of life in learning how to crawl then learning how to stand and then learning how to take your first steps and then eventually learning how to run?

I mean, how do you learn to get up if you don't fall?"

I hate talking about this, which is why Daddy never forces the issue. It rubs me off the wrong way and I just withdraw into a shell.

"Don't be too hard on your dad, you don't know what he might be trying to do by siding

with her. Sure, it hurts you but they want the best for you."

"I guess you're right. Anyway, tell me a bit more about you," I change the subject.

No one can ever make me believe that I'm being unfair by feeling the way that I do. Not even Mathonga.

"Well, I am Mathonga Nkosi, a thirty-three-year-old businessman. I run some of my father's businesses. I am an art curator by night and the perfect son by day. I enjoy cooking. I love hanging out with my bros. But most importantly, I think I like hanging with this Nkosazana chick I recently met. I think she's going to become the best part of my days," he says, gazing into my eyes.

Smooth!

I have mentioned that he's smooth, right? My eyes go to his lips - big mistake. He's licking his bottom lip and it's drawing me in. It's suddenly hot in here. Is he feeling as hot as I am!?

Of course, he isn't. He's shirtless.

"Your turn," he whispers.

My turn what!? Oh! About myself. Right. I clear my throat.

"Erm, I...I" -who am I again? I don't know-

"I'm Nkosazana Mpangazitha. A twenty-seven-year-old, career adventurer.

I try new things in my spare time, which is all day, every day. I don't have a fancy job title. Heck, I don't have a job." That's all I can remember about myself.

Nothing more.

This is not right. He has no right to mess with my mind like this. It's dangerous when people have this kind of power over you. It doesn't make sense for another human to weaken your immune system like this. Wrong!!!

He slides closer to me. My entire body stiffens.

"I want to kiss you, Nkosazana," he whispers.

His voice is smooth and decadent.

He wants to kiss me.

Shitty thing is I think I'd enjoy that. He slides closer again until we're touching. My breath

hitches. Oh dear Lord.

He leans in. He's going to kiss me.

My heart is thudding painfully against my chest. It might just jump out.

"You're beautiful. So beautiful."

Closer.

"I've never met anyone quite as intriguing," he adds.

Closer.

Just as his lips are about to greet mine, my phone rings, forcing us apart.

Thank goodness.

It's Daddy.

"Can I take this by the balcony?"

He nods.

"Hi, Daddy," I answer, closing the door behind me.

"Hey, gorgeous. I miss you. I just needed to hear your voice."

I giggle, "Sweet. Maybe you should just keep a recording of my voice for such moments."

"Maybe I should. Are you okay? Do you need anything?"

"I'm fine," I roll my eyes, "stop worrying

about me. Enjoy your time out in between meetings."

Silence.

I heave a sigh.

"I'll see you in a few days."

"Ditto!"

We say our goodbyes and hang up. He's such a sweet man.

I love him.

I don't think I could ever love another the way I do him. He's taken over and corrupted my system for other men. I doubt anyone else could survive in here the way he has.

It's him.

Sigh.

Now, how am I going to step back into the apartment knowing very well that I wasn't going to stop him from kissing me!?

CHAPTER SIX

The doors ping open and he walks in. He looks dapper, as always. He has on a dark purple, almost navy blue, suit with a white shirt. His hair is freshly cut into a fade. He looks better than he did when I saw him about a week ago.

He is an incredibly handsome man, no doubt and the fact that he puts effort into his looks makes him that much more handsome.

"I've missed you," He pulls me in, pouncing on my lips, "you look good."

He picks me up; I wrap my legs around his waist. He'd never drop me. He hasn't thus far. We're moving, to the bedroom perhaps. Yep! He gently sets me on the bed without

breaking the kiss. We get rid of his blazer. His tie follows suit closely followed by his shirt.

My dress has ridden up to my waist, I'm ready! His lips leave my mouth and I suddenly feel empty. I slowly open my eyes; he's looking at me with so much intensity.

"What's wrong?" I whisper.

He gets off of me and positions himself next to me. No sex? I turn on my side to face him.

"I want to help you achieve your dreams," he says.

I scrunch my nose, "Couldn't you have told me this after dicking me down?"

He laughs. Obviously, he thinks this is funny.

"I need to do this now. I know you don't like to be a kept woman and I'm not trying to make you my handbag. I want you to be independent and accomplish everything you ever thought of. I'm here, use me. Let's build your empire," he says.

Tears. I hate tears. I hate that he's activated that vulnerable side of me.

"Baby..."

"You're young, vibrant, filled with life and

dreams. Don't allow yourself to waste away like you don't have a man that works hard to provide for all your needs. Use me. Use my money. Use my connections."

"You're... I..." I heave a sigh.

I've never had to ask Daddy for anything since we started dating, he just does things for me. I get very awkward about asking for help. I've never been one to cry out to the world, asking for assistance. I would much rather die in silence than call out – bad habit, I know.

"I'm here for you, Nkosazana. I'm your man. Sure, our relationship has some issues but that doesn't mean I love you any less. You're still my beautiful Nkosazana. The girl that took my breath away the first time I laid eyes on her. You've helped me through so much and now it's my time to return the favour."

"I helped you through because I love you, not because I was counting favours."

"I know that and you know that's not how I meant it."

"I know... I'm sorry," I place a peck on his

lips, "thank you for loving me enough to want the best for me. I appreciate you."

"So, what business are we starting?"

Gosh. How perfect is he? It's sickening! His phone rings, disturbing the moment. He grunts before answering it.

"Yes?" He smiles at me. "Right now? I'm kind of busy at the moment," he says.

He groans, "Okay, I'm on my way."

He hangs up and slides off the bed, fixing himself.

"I have to dash. Can we pick this up some other time?"

I know what this means.

"Sure. I should also get going," I say.

"No. Stay."

"Nope."

I'm not staying here without him. It wouldn't make sense. We both head out. He wants to drop me off but I insist on taking an Uber.

The ride arrives. Unfortunately, this one talks too much. I'm only giving him short responses but he's not letting up. Argh.

"Can I bring you ice cream?" - a text from

Mathonga.

"Shouldn't you be busy handling daddy's companies?" - send.

"Daddy can wait a bit. He's been pestering me about a daughter-in-law, I'm trying to score him one. So... Ice cream?"

He isn't even giving me a chance to process what he has just said. But then again he does that a lot.

After I wrapped up my call with Daddy on his balcony, I drew in a deep breath and found the courage to walk back in. I found him cleaning up in the kitchen looking sexy as hell.

The tension was still there. In fact, it was more intense. He poured me a glass of wine and told me to relax while he cleans up. I figured he was using that time to calm himself and his thoughts.

The glass of wine was a bad idea because by the time he came to sit next to me I knew that my tongue would just flow, which would be disastrous.

"Would you like to pick up where we left

off?" he asked.

Did I want to pick up where we left off?

Yes! Everything in me screamed yes and it was not because of the wine. And honestly speaking, we would have but Daddy's name flashed across my mind, forcing me to pull myself back from this situation.

Mathonga understood. Or well, he said he did. But I could see the disappointment on his face. Heck, my body was disappointed in me as well but I know I made the right decision. I don't think cheating on Daddy would have brought me any peace at all.

The guy has been so good to me and thanking him by having sex with someone I had just met the previous night would have been throwing egg on his face.

"I have someone in my life, Mathonga. I can't do this," I said.

He sucked in a breath, "Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realise... I... I didn't know. I'm sorry."

I left Mathonga's place and made my way home feeling a bit under, for some reason but we've been texting every day since. I actually

enjoy engaging with him. He's fun and intense at the same time. I don't know... There's something about him.

"I'll make it Stracciatella," - he texts again.

I grunt. No fair! He knows that's my absolute favourite and I'd swim across the Nile for a spoon. He's playing dirty!

"Fine!" - I text. My message is accompanied by my address.

Weird. Again, I'm trusting him. So weird!

I arrive home and quickly dash to the shower. A quick five-minute shower will do. I would've enjoyed a minute longer but sizothini! My phone rings just as I'm throwing on my dress. It's him alerting me that he has arrived. I slip my feet into my sleepers and make my way downstairs.

There he is with a green plastic from Woolworths in one hand and a bouquet of flowers in the other. He smiles brightly when he sees me.

"Nkosazana," Themba calls out, "beautiful, as always."

"My favourite human, ever so charming.

How are you?"

"Good and you? Headed out?"

"No, just signing a friend in," I say, pointing at Mathonga.

Themba looks at him and nods, hard face. They share a look. Testosterone.

I sign Mathonga in and we head up to my apartment, "Welcome to my humble abode."

He drops the flowers and plastic on the counter then looks around, walking around.

My decor is all white and grey with hints of colour that is brought in by the flowers.

He stops in front of the portrait I have hanging on the bare wall. It's a black and white image of me, nude.

He turns back to look at me with a smirk, "Do you have a copy of this?"

I roll my eyes. Obviously! "You're gorgeous. You're even better nude," he adds.

I'm blushing. I hate this guy!

"You need some ice cream to cool off," I say, "we're eating straight from the tub."

"Ooh, we're sharing spit. Stop, I have a girlfriend," he teases.

Ridiculous!

We settle on the couch. One tub. Two spoons. I moan in appreciation. Stracciatella is the girl she thinks she is! She is me!

We indulge in our ice cream in silence. I can feel his eyes penetrating through me but I'm trying my best not to give him my attention.

"So my dad wants me to go and handle some business in Cape Town for a couple of weeks," he says, randomly.

I turn to look at him, "Would you like to come with me?" he adds.

Oh hell no!

I mean, yes.

NO! You don't even know the man!

He can see the tug of war happening in my mind. I wear my emotions on my sleeve - read face.

First, I went to his place a day after I met him. Second, I invited him to my place. Now, I'm considering going to Cape Town with him.

Rubbish!!!

"Mathonga..."

"Yeah, yeah, you can't because you don't really know me. I get it. So what are you going to do with yourself while I'm away?"

I chuckle, "I've only known you for all of five minutes, I'm sure I can survive without you for a couple of weeks."

He gasps, clutching his chest.

"You wound me, Nkosazana."

I shrug, "I have that effect on people."

He's quietly staring at me. I wish I could read his thoughts. Sometimes, even over the phone, he goes quiet, seemingly deep in thought. At this moment I'd kill to be a prophet just so I can read his thoughts. They read minds, right? I can't take it anymore, so I ask him why he's looking at me like that.

"You're out of this world beautiful," he says, sliding closer to me.

I want to pull my gaze away from him but I can't. It's like he's hypnotising me.

He cups my face and runs his thumb over my bottom lip. There goes my breathing again.

"I'm going to kiss you now."

He doesn't even give me a chance to respond,

his lips gently land on mine. My body turns to jelly. His kiss is slow, sensual and filled with passion. He sighs before deepening the kiss. His tongue slides against mine, I moan. His hands leave my face and settle on my waist. My body wants more than what his mouth is delivering and I hate it. I hate that I want him. Damn it, his lips are so good. He's such an incredible kisser. I'm fucked!

CHAPTER SEVEN

I pull my mouth from his, push him away, and get up from the couch in an attempt to gather my thoughts. Shit!

Really, Nkosazana!? Really!?

You just kissed the guy. What the hell?

I feel his arms around my waist before he rests his chin on my shoulder. I can feel his breathing on my neck. I shudder.

"I'm sorry," he whispers.

My spine! My damn spine!

He shouldn't have this kind of effect on me. Especially after I told him that I have someone in my life.

"I shouldn't have kissed you," he continues.

"Mathonga..."

"I know I shouldn't but I can't help myself. I've only known you for a short while but I'd love to have you in my life, Nkosazana. I'm trying to fight these feelings, believe me, I am, but it's so damn hard. I don't think I can..."

I sigh. I hate that my body is reacting to his touch right now. I hate that my breathing tells a story of a girl under a guy's spell.

The truth is there is something about Mathonga that makes me forget about everything whenever I talk to him. It's even worse being in his presence.

His voice melts like butter in my ear. He kisses my neck and I shudder.

I shouldn't be allowed to feel these kinds of feelings towards another man. I have a man that loves me and treats me right for crying out loud! My body should only come to life at his command!

"Nkosazana..."

I draw in a breath. His voice sounds like a good cup of coffee on a cold, rainy Sunday morning. It's soothing.

"Mathonga..."

We're still standing in the same position; his arms around my waist and my body in the palm of his hand. One mistake and I die.

"Give me a chance," his words are accompanied by a sense-killing kiss on the neck.

If my stomach churns any more than it already has, we're making ice cream.

"I... I have a man," I whisper.

It's taken everything in me to utter that sentence.

"I know you do and I respect that but I want you. I want you in my life. In fact, I think I might just need you. Give me a chance."

"Mathonga, no..."

His hands slowly move up from my waist to my breast, gently circling, awakening the hoe in me. I want to push him away but he has rendered me weak and unable to dismiss his command.

"You want me," he whispers in my ear, "you might not want to want me but you want me."

He kisses the back of my neck. Shoulder. Side of my neck. All the while squeezing my breast to life.

"Mathonga... please..."

"Take you? You want me to take you?"

No!

I want him to stop!

I want him to release me from his spell.

"I can't..."

My mind is telling me no but my bloody body is singing a different tune!

Thankfully, his phone rings, breaking the spell. He curses under his breath as he steps back to answer.

"Pops?"

I'm still rooted in the same spot. I've been super glued onto this spot.

"I'm kind of in the middle of something right now."

No, he must leave!

"Fine. I'll entertain your wife but you better make it worth my while."

He laughs. There goes my stomach.

"Love ya! See you soon."

He hangs up and the tension recommences. I hear him say the word beautiful under his breath before I feel him right behind me.

"I have to go," he announces.

I'm not sad about that! Let him go! He must go!

"Okay." Gosh, that's not my voice.

"We need to finish off where we left off next time."

Oh hell no!

I get the courage to turn around and I immediately regret it. The lust... I can read it off of him. The bulge in his pants screams painfully.

"Please consider my offer. Please come with me to Cape Town. We're going together as friends, I promise I won't make a move on you."

His eyes say he's telling the truth but his body language is telling a different story.

Cape Town.

I don't know.

"I don't know, Mathonga. After this moment, I don't know..."

"I promise you. I'll keep my hands off you. I'm sure you deserve the break. Please just think about it," he begs.

"Fine." I'm not saying fine to going with him but to thinking about it.

He pulls me in for a hug. I sigh. I hold him back. He feels so cuddly.

"I've never met anyone that makes me feel this way."

"Mathonga..."

"I know. I know. I have to go. I'll call you later, okay?"

"Okay."

We're still holding onto each other. I want to pull back but I can't. Thankfully, he saves me and pulls back.

He stares at me. Like really stares at me.

"I'll call you."

"Okay."

I walk him to the door. He knows his way out. He'll be fine.

Sigh.

I can't believe both my guys bailed in the middle of our meet up. How weird. Is it bad

luck?

Wait, since when is Mathonga my guy?

No. I need to get this guy off of my mind. He doesn't deserve to reside in my thoughts.

Argh. Mathonga! Fuck!

CHAPTER EIGHT

How did I go from solely being with Daddy to having Mathonga added into the equation? Sharp, we're not dating, Mathonga and I that is, but he has snuck up under my skin and it's driving me crazy.

We still talk every day, he calls and texts me just as much as my man does, if not more. He makes me laugh and feel giddy. Ridiculous! I don't know what to make of our connection. There are times when I enjoy our conversations and how our souls connect but I quickly have to remind myself that I have a man and I hate what I'm doing to him because he doesn't deserve this.

As I've said before, my relationship with

Daddy is a bit complicated but even though we know where it is, it doesn't mean I want to hurt him or jump into bed with the first guy that I see. He still deserves my loyalty.

Daddy is an incredible man. He is love personified in my life. When he asked me to be his, I knew that life would never be the same again, not just financially but in every other aspect as well.

He has brought me joy, peace and all round happiness. Honestly, even if he didn't have money, I'd still be with him. His money is a plus. I have never been about the money. What I like about a guy are his qualities. Don't get me wrong, a man must have money but it's not the first thing I look for.

A man needs to be smart, passionate and a man-man. You know, man-man!

I groan in pain.

I hate this!

I hate that I find myself in a tug of war with myself. It shouldn't even be an issue but here it is, consuming most of my time. I think the only reason it's such a big deal is that

Mathonga is constantly in my face.

After he left, he called to tell me that he arrived safely at his parents, not that I asked him to.

Apparently, his dad wanted to plan a surprise for his mom so he needed Mathonga to keep her distracted because she usually finds out about surprises before he can even plan them.

His parents sound like they have an incredible relationship. I don't know, I'd love to have that with someone, one day.

I groan again.

There I go breaking my own damn heart!

You know what, stop thinking about love and focus on your business plan.

Daddy tasked me with jotting down my ideas and putting them together. I told him I'm not very good with business proposals and plans, so he said he'd help me with that. All I needed to do was put all my ideas together and take it from there.

I've always wanted to own an eatery, a dainty cafe, that serves great food and offers

excellent service. I love food. I'm a foodie. I believe it's my life's calling to eat. Just that. Eat. I've been researching the type of food I want to have on my menu. I need to find a chef and create a menu and see if it'll work out as good as I see it.

I have no knowledge when it comes to the food industry; all I have is a passion for food so I'm definitely going to need someone to hold my hand. Maybe Daddy can talk to chef Russo for me. He's an incredible chef and I absolutely bow before his chef greatness. I've feasted in different restaurants in different parts of the city and no one comes close to Russo and I'm not just saying that because I want his help.

Grins!

I've looked at potential locations for the restaurant and obviously, I'm thinking Ferndale because I live in the area but practically I know that I might need to find something else. Something that has a lot of footprints.

I know that Braam and Auckland Park and

the likes have a lot of footprint because of the students around the areas. Plus, my food is going to appeal to that kind of crowd so maybe that could work. I'll just ask Daddy if he knows who can survey and see if this will be lucrative there or not.

Suddenly, I'm going excited! I feel alive and with purpose, something I haven't felt in a long while.

I need to thank Daddy for this opportunity!
Properly!

CHAPTER NINE

Chef Russo has invited me into his kitchen for an afternoon of cooking and food creation. The restaurant is closed tonight, so we have the entire kitchen to ourselves for the night.

When I ran my ideas past Daddy a few days ago, he immediately spoke to Chef Russo who was more than happy to assist me. He - Daddy - also got me someone who will research the best spot to open this joint at. Daddy seems to believe Braam will work well; I hate to admit this but I think so too. But we'll wait for his guy to finish with his research.

I have on a chef's hat and jacket - snap for

the gram!

"Thank you for this," I say looking at him, "I truly appreciate this."

He smiles, "You're nice people. It's a pleasure."

I'm nice people. Blush!

What!?! Chef Russo is a handsome Italian man. He's white chocolate. Who doesn't like white chocolate?

"So, why did you choose food?"

"I love cooking because I enjoy creating recipes, trying new dishes, you know, seeing how they work together in recipes. I love making people's taste buds dance in joy."

The passion is radiating off of him. His eyes sparkle as he speaks about his passion. I love people who are in fields they actually enjoy. I know not all of us have the luxury of doing what makes our hearts burst and brings us alive, so it makes me happy to be in the presence of passion.

I hope one day we'll get to the point where people can actually work in fields they desire to be in and not just anywhere because they

need the job.

Apparently, Russo was a chef at the Empire Palace Hotel. He left the hotel when he was headhunted.

"I wanted to travel the world and meet new people, so when this offer came, I knew I had to take it. South Africa is a beautiful country with beautiful people and rich history. Who wouldn't want to live here?" he says.

"A lot of people. Sure, we have all these things but we're also a broken nation man. I'm sorry, but if I had the chance, I'd leave."

"Why?"

"It's painful living here. The unemployment rate? We're suffering. Sure, a few of us are able to live in luxury but what about the rest? It's hard seeing the tears of my fellow countrymen. It hurts."

"But that doesn't mean you should run away."

"It's what I do, Chef. I run away from my problems in hopes of them disappearing. I ignore my issues until I can't think of them, so..." I shrug.

He chuckles, "That's unhealthy. You can't always run away from things. I know that sometimes it is easier to put on a front and pretend that certain things don't exist but that is not how life works. Imagine if we all decided to pack up and run off when life deals us heavy blows. What would happen to humanity? What would happen to the Earth?"

"Well, the Creator would see what he does with his creation."

"You're funny," He laughs, "We are all placed on earth for a purpose. We are all placed on earth for a reason and though we might not know it yet, though it might take time before we get to fully understand why, we need to continue fighting until we get to that point and fighting includes not running away. Standing firm and standing in your truth is fighting."

What's happening right now? I thought we were coming here to roast the chicken, not me.

Look, sometimes it's easier to pretend like

you woke up and received a blank page. Better yet, a new book. It's easier to pretend that you're a newborn with zero sin and zero knowledge of the world.

"Truth sometimes breaks," I whisper.

"Or it restores. We need to actively fight for our restoration. We fight, we fight and we fight."

He smiles, "Now, let's pick one fight. Let's fight for a menu that will blow people away, yes?"

I love his smile. It's assuring and filled with warmth. I know he's not judging me and that's what I needed right now.

Anyway, let's get cooking!

I'm laughing, and frying and flipping. I haven't had this much fun in a while. Chef Russo is in his element, he's speaking industry jargon. I don't get much of what he is saying but I am following his instructions to the T!

Who would've thought that I would be here flipping pizza dough? Funny!

By the end of our cooking session, the

kitchen is messy but my heart is full. I'm happy. We've made so much food, I don't know how we're going to finish this.

Chef Russo packs a whole lot of food for me. Who am I going to finish this with? I'm not cooking for days.

"I appreciate you," I say throwing my hands around him.

"You're going to be fine. Emotionally as well."

I will. I always make it. Nothing new there. I'm spending the night at the penthouse because it's too late for me to head back to my place. it's a quick fifteen-minute drive but I'm too tired. Plus, Daddy did say I could stay here whenever I wanted.

The doors ping open and I push my breakfast cart into the penthouse. The TV is on. Daddy's home. I squeal excitedly when he steps into the living area. Never mind the fact that I smell like oil and look a hot mess, I run into his embrace and he catches me as I throw myself at him. I immediately attack his lips.

Kissing the man is a passion of mine, much like what cooking is to chef Russo.

"You seem like you enjoyed yourself," he comments as he lays me down on the bed.

"I had the time of my life. It was like the kitchen is my happy place," I say, earning me a laugh from this man.

Rolls eyes. I know I don't always cook much when we're together, hence the reaction.

"I would pay big bucks to see this."

"Prepare to be bankrupt."

He gazes at me. There is something about the way Daddy looks at me. He looks at me like he sees me. Like he has the key to the parts of me that I'd like to keep locked up.

It's like he sees the person I'm fighting to become. He sees me. Not as just some pretty girl with potential but as a woman with depth and more to offer than she knows.

He looks at me like he has held the hand of the woman he knows I can be.

He smiles with a twinkle in his eyes.

"What?" I ask him.

"You're still as beautiful as the first day I laid

my eyes on you."

Blush!

I know I've said that I've loved him since the first time I saw him, which is somewhat true. I was attracted to him from the moment I saw him. He was by far the most handsome man in the room.

We were at a luncheon hosted by one of his friends. My bestie managed to score us invites - don't ask how.

He was the second person I saw and the moment he smiled at me, I immediately forgot about the first one. I remember how he made his way towards me, his eyes still glued to me. I thought he was going to be cheesy and tell me I'm beautiful, but he didn't. Well, he did tell me by the end of the night.

"Could I please get your numbers so that I can call you later? I want to check something," he said.

I was obviously taken aback because WTH! I never esperrerit!

I laughed but he kept his intense gaze on me

and that had me melting for some reason. So I gave him my number and he walked away. We didn't talk the entire day, but I could feel his eyes on me occasionally. Just as we were about to leave, he walked up to me, smile still on his face.

"By the way, you're beautiful." That was all he said before he walked away.

And I have been caught under his spell ever since.

Sometimes I find myself in tears when I think about us but I'm happy and we're happy. That's all that matters.

"Sometimes I feel like I'm not doing enough for you, Nkosazana. I sometimes feel like you deserve more than I can offer but at the same time, I'm too selfish to let you go because you breathe life into me. You bring me joy unexplainable. Whenever I'm in your presence, I get excited because I know when I leave, I will be filled up. You, Nkosazana, you make days brighter."

Are those tears in his eyes? Whoah! Weird!

"Daddy..."

I reach over and wipe his tears. He holds my right wrist and kisses my palm.

"I love you. I truly do."

I nod with a faint smile, "I know. I love you too."

Sigh.

CHAPTER TEN

I wake wrapped in my man's warmth. I smile and snuggle closer. We never get to snuggle in, so I appreciate it, a lot, when we do.

"Wakey wakey," he whispers, pulling my earlobe between his lips.

I moan. His hand is in between my thighs, riding higher.

"I'm swollen," I protest.

He had me all night long, in every position. I tapped out but he has a big appetite, so we kept going. He ate me out, fucked me black and blue and made love to me. I think I've had enough to last me the week but knowing Daddy, this was nothing.

"Nothing a little rod magic can't fix," he

whispers.

"Haaa ah, Daddy."

He laughs, "I'll leave you be just this once only because I have a surprise for you."

"Oh?"

"It's a surprise. Now, get up, let's order breakfast."

Order? Has he forgotten that we have enough food to last us a lifetime? I remind him and he laughs, "I forgot you and Russo cooked the entire kitchen. Okay, then let's have that breakfast then get ready to leave."

Leave? "Where are we going?"

"It's a surprise, Nkosazana. Now, let's go."

He slides out of the covers and grabs my leg, forcing me up. I laugh hysterically. I hate it when he does this but I always laugh.

"Okay, okay! I'm up! Geez! So childish!"

He spanks my ass, "Juicy!"

I roll my eyes. Annoying.

We take a shower. He obviously tries to have sex with me but I put my foot down. You'd swear he has imbiza in his system. I wouldn't put it past him though.

I'm still dressed in yesterday's outfit because I don't have clothes here. We'll have to stop by at my place so that I can change out of this outfit.

We have pizza for breakfast with coffee and stolen kisses in between – my favourite! Once we finish, we grab our stuff and head out. We ride the elevator all the way down to the basement.

I shake my head while he smirks.

"You didn't want it, so I kept it for myself," he says.

Once upon a time, he bought me a G-63 but I declined, for obvious reasons. I haven't seen this car since he tried to force it down my throat with a big ass bow on it. I admit, it's a gorgeous car but it draws attention and how was I going to explain how I got the car? See, problems!

He opens the door for me, as always. This interior is everything. Blecke - colour ya manyora!

He gets into the car and looks at me. Argh, this man!

"Yes, it's nice," I say.

"Nice!? Nice, Nkosazana? Nice? Dogs are nice. This? This is a beast!"

"You're a beast," I say, biting my bottom lip.

He grunts, "You better be unswollen by the time we get to where we're going."

I chortle. Unswollen!? I don't think that's a word.

"Apart from the word that doesn't exist, I can't go around with yesterday's clothes on. I refuse."

He smiles. He's such a beautiful man.

"I've got that covered. You just pick our playlist and relax."

You don't have to tell me twice. A bit of Piano ain't never hurt nobody! Plus, he enjoys it now. He gives me the side-eye and a smirk. Handsome.

The entire drive is filled with laughter and our bad singing. Oh, and hand-holding. He has my hand in his the entire time, kissing it and even licking it. Disgusting. I know. But it's a love language thing or something. I don't know.

We drive into the Riverside Sun Hotel. I look at him questionably.

"Surprise," he whispers.

This man. I shake my head. He's too perfect. We make our way up to the lobby and my entire body immediately relaxes. There is something about being in luxury that heals. Money is a healing factor.

Don't let them fool you.

I look around in awe while he checks in.

"Good afternoon, Sir. The suite is ready for you and your bags have arrived. I'll have them sent up to your suite."

"Thank you. Please have some champagne sent up to the room. Baby, let's go." He takes my hand in his.

"Isn't check-in usually at around three? It's only past twelve."

He laughs, "My name is Muziwokhaya. I make things happen," he says, smirking.

I love it when his ego takes over; it's sexy! Don't tell him that though.

The suite is heaven, the bedroom is separate from the living area! I kick my shoes off and

feel the carpet under my feet. Soft; comfortable enough to have my break put out on it.

"When did you plan this?" I ask him.

"I told you, I get things done. I make things happen."

"How long are we here for?"

"Four days."

The suite overlooks the river. Tranquillity. The air breathes different and richer. Money things, I told you. There are bags on the bed. Apparently, he had someone shop for a couple of things for us. Knowing him and his taste, I'm looking regal the entire trip. Not that I'm complaining.

He wraps his arms around my waist.

"All I want to do is make you as happy as you make me."

"You make me happy, Daddy," I assure him. I wouldn't be with him if he didn't. I might be a lot of things but I'm not a ghel that stays for the heck of it. I wouldn't disrespect myself like that.

When Daddy came into my life, I connected

with parts of me that I had been struggling with. The man forced me out of my cage and pushed me to live a bit. He's been a great instrument of progress in my life, not just financially.

"Even though -"

"Yes, even though..."

My phone ringing disturbs us. It's my dad.

"Baba."

"Nkosazana, how are you, my girl?"

Daddy still has his arms around my waist, his chin rested on my shoulder.

"I'm good and you?"

"We're fine, my girl. We just miss you."

I scoff, internally that is. They? A joke! He might, but his wife? I doubt it.

"But you just saw me the other day."

"That was months ago," he sulks, "when are you coming to see us? I have something that I need to talk to you about."

"Sounds serious. Is everything okay?"

He clears his throat, "Yes, everything is fine. We'll talk about it when you come home."

"Work is really busy at the moment, so I

don't know when I can make it to KZN. But as soon as I accumulate enough days, I'll come through."

"Nkosazana -"

"Baba, please..."

He sighs, "Okay, I understand. It was good hearing your voice."

"I love you."

"I love you too, my girl."

We hang up and it takes everything in me not to crumble down to the ground. But I do feel light-headed. Daddy feels this as well because he has a tight grip around my body.

"You're strong and beautiful. Whatever it is, we can get through it together. Okay?"

I nod. That's all I can do.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"I miss you," - that's a message from Mathonga.

I blush. I miss his stupid ass too but I won't dare tell him that. Ego things.

"I leave for Cape Town in two days. There's still enough time for you to decide to join me," - another text.

I thought I told him no, so I don't get why he is forcing the issue. I don't appreciate what he is doing right now. He is trying to coerce me into agreeing, which is wrong.

The door opens and Daddy walks in. He went out to get us some snacks, which baffled me because the hotel offers such services. I just think he wanted to give me my time by

myself, which I appreciate.

He walks in with a paper bag in one hand and a bunch of roses in the other. Now it makes sense why he wanted to go out.

"Small gifts for the pretty lady," he says.

The smile on my face can power up the entire SA grid. It's the small things, not so small, that he does that have me falling deeper in love with him.

"Open it," he says excitedly.

He seems really pleased with himself. I open the bag and my heart leaps while my stomach gets invaded by butterflies.

"Daddy..."

"You like it?"

It's a fluffy teddy bear. He's white and he's got on a... Wait... What the!?

"You didn't!"

He kisses my forehead, "I told you, you deserve flowers and diamonds."

This guy though!

It's a diamond bracelet.

"This is so beautiful. I love it. Thank you, baby!"

"You up for seeing people or should we order in?"

Oh, dinner. I'd like to go out. I need some air. He makes a reservation. Two hours away.

We make ourselves comfortable on the bed with my head on his chest. I always enjoy being this close to him, feeling his skin and listening to his heart beating.

"You're gaining more muscle," I comment. I can feel him smiling, "You noticed."

He sounds a bit emotional as he says this. I get why.

"Of course I did. I kind of notice all the small things."

"Indulge me."

I chuckle, "I notice how you always shave your beard before it even comes to say hi. I notice how you twist your lip and scrunch your nose whenever you're stressed. I notice how you disappear into your thoughts whenever you think I'm not watching. I notice how your left eye is always a bit more shut than your right. I also notice how you sometimes look at me with sadness all over

your face."

He tightens his hold on my body; I know it has everything to do with my last statement.

He clears his throat, "I'm sorry, Nkosazana," his voice is breaking.

"Don't cry, baby. You're my soldier. I've got you."

"I know you do. Life has a crazy way of working out, huh!?"

We both laugh. It sure does but that doesn't mean we shouldn't enjoy the moments that are.

He kisses the top of my head.

"Anyway, I think you shouldn't bulk up any further. Who's going to wipe your ass when your arms can't bend?" I ask.

His laughter is the greatest thing in the world. It brings me peace.

"Why would you even think of such!?" I shrug. I see gym guys, he mustn't dare, "Or maybe you want to wipe my ass but you're just too shy to say so."

"Ewwwww! I'm too pretty for that. Ew!"

"So wouldn't wipe my ass?"

"NO!"

"Well, you know, I'm -"

"Don't say it. Zip it!"

He rolls on the floor in laughter.

"Fine but one day is one day."

I think not! Imagine my nails. I don't like wiping my own damn ass now imagine someone else's. He pulls me closer and runs his hand around my back, drawing patterns, forcing me to relax and slip away.

I don't fight it. Emotionally, I'm slightly tired, so a recharge will do us good.

I woke up five minutes ago and I have fifteen minutes to get ready for dinner. Luckily I have a strong man that is able to carry me and bathe me and dress me, which is what he is doing. He lathers the shower gel all over my body. Sensually, might I add. His eyes are glued to my breast. I want to laugh at how tight he is but I die internally.

Once he finishes, we step out and he dries me

before applying lotion all over my body. He picked out a short, red, silk dress for me and paired it with white lace-up high heeled sandals. I think he was a stylist in his past life.

"No panties?" I enquire.

He smirks, "No. Let her breathe. She's about to take a night long pounding."

I shudder. Something about how he says that has me weak.

He means it. See what I meant about imbiza? Sometimes he reminds me just how sexy he is by dressing to the T. This shirt holds his arms perfectly and the pants? Well, let's just say his pants look great.

We share a deep, passionate kiss before heading down for some grub.

We're having dinner on the terrace. The breeze is just perfect.

Peace.

This is peaceful.

So many of us pray for such days, even moments. We pray for the moment God will hear our cries and wipe our tears. We pray for

moments of tenderness and love. I'm grateful that I've received it. Even if it's just for a moment.

"Where did you just go? Is it the issue with your dad?"

Sigh. Nope. I don't even want to think about that but I know that he's worried and wants to help me because that's what he does. He helps me.

"I don't know."

"You can't run away from whatever it is forever. At some point, you need to deal with it and move forward knowing that you're leaving nothing hanging."

He sounds like Chef Russo.

"Muzi..."

"No, Nkosazana. Work through things, deal with whatever is hurting you, and fix whatever issues you have with your parents because I know something happened during your last trip, even though you don't want to talk about it.

We sometimes forget that time is a luxury. You don't want to wake up tomorrow with

regrets of today. So, go home. Listen to what your dad has to say and if you can't handle it, call me. You know I'll be there in a flash."

Thank God I don't have any make-up on because it would be a mess. I'm also grateful for the fact that we're away from people. He switches seats and comes to sit next to me, pulling me into his arms. "I've got you. I'm here for you."

I nod. I know he is. I know he does. I just don't know where to start with everything. The truth is I discovered something that changed the course of my life and I don't think things will ever be the same again. The discovery put a lot of things into perspective. I just don't know how to go about things.

I pull back and wipe my tears.

"Thank you."

"No need to thank me." He kisses my nose. Sometimes Daddy is sweet and cute.

"No, let's get you a bit tipsy so you can forget about life, just for a little bit."

"I love you."

He chuckles, "It's the mention of alcohol that

has you suddenly seeing me as a potential, ne?"

Stupid!

I nod, "Guilty. Nothing about you screams and stands out, you know. You're just bland but the alcohol? Haaa!"

"Well, any guy would be lucky to get a chance to sit with you, so where is the damn waiter before you change your mind."

We share a laugh. This is why he's my guy. He's awesome!

CHAPTER TWELVE

"What is something you want to do together that we haven't?" he asks.

Today is day two and we're staying in the entire day. We went out earlier to get some alcohol and snacks. We ordered in and now we're cuddling on the carpet. Have I ever mentioned that Daddy makes mean cocktails? Man, that man knows how to mix a drink.

I know I'm getting drunk tonight. I'm not complaining though.

"I mean, we haven't really travelled together.

Although it might be a bit of an issue" –of course, it's going to be an issue- "that's one thing I'd like us to do," I tell him.

"Yeah, we need to travel a bit. So where have you always wanted to travel?"

He is avoiding what I've just said

"Clear blue waters. Anywhere."

"Done. So, have you ever wanted to move somewhere else?"

Hell yeah! Although I did notice how that 'done' was just uttered to move things along.

"I have and I moved here to Joburg."

"Do you regret it?"

I sigh, "Sometimes. Sometimes I look at you and I regret my decision. But other times I look at you and I'm completely satisfied with that decision."

"Nkosa-"

"Don't get me wrong. I've never hidden the fact that sometimes our relationship makes me sad but that doesn't take away the fact that I love you and you're a big part of my life. I'm grateful that I took the leap and moved to Joburg because I discovered a part

of my heart that I didn't know I was missing
- YOU."

He's my happy place and regardless of
anything else that is happening, I'm grateful.

"And you? Have you ever wanted to move?"

He's staring at me. I know he wants to say
something but I've shut him down, so he
won't say anything.

"I've thought about it in recent times but life
would never allow me to, so I guess not."

I don't even want him to elaborate.

"What things do you look forward to each
day?" I ask him.

He kisses my shoulder, "Cheesy, but I always
look forward to seeing you."

I laugh.

"You're right, it is cheesy but I love it
because I also look forward to seeing you as
well. It hurts when we're not together."

He sighs. Now he's overthinking.

"You're my favourite thing, you know that?"
he says.

"A lie," I chuckle, "but I'll take it."

We both know that I'm probably his second

favourite thing.

"Argh, what are you hoping to learn in the next year?"

"Shuu, a lot. I need to learn how to emotionally accept and let go because I know that it's holding me back... a lot."

"And you know I'm here to support you in whatever way I can, right?" he says.

I know, "Maybe we should look into getting you a psychologist to start the journey and maybe getting you spiritual help as well."

"No thank you, on both ends. I'm not ready for the spiritual side of things and I'm not comfortable with opening up to a stranger about my life."

He laughs softly, "It's funny how we used to think that I was the emotionless robot at the beginning of our relationship but look at us now," he teases.

I chortle. Such a stupid man.

"But you were! You hardly opened up to me about anything. I don't know how I even said yes to you."

"I'm sexy and you couldn't resist me.

Simple." He shrugs.

"I'll pop your muscles right now."

"How do you come up with these things?"

He's laughing.

He makes me say ridiculous things! It's his fault!

He's gazing at me like he's deep in thought again. I always wonder what goes through his mind when he does that.

"Do you trust me?" he asks.

Deep. Random.

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't."

He knows this.

When he first started pursuing me, he quickly figured out that trust was something that I struggled with and he worked hard to ensure that he earned my trust, which he did. One might say it's ironic, I know. I try not to think too much about certain things and this is one of them.

He leans forward and I do the same; meeting him in what I can only describe as the most passionate and electric kiss we've shared thus far. It feels different. Deeper. Filled with

more meaning.

Our moans and groans fill the room as our hands roam around each other's bodies, feeling and exploring.

The gown that I had on is gone; I'm exposed to him as he is to me. He lays me down on the carpet. Our lips are still locked in this heated, passionate kiss. I can feel his third leg knocking against my thigh.

"I want you so bad," he murmurs.

"Take me," I whisper back.

I want him just as badly, if not more. I'm kind of addicted to him.

Breakfast in bed. How sweet and romantic. He instructs me to go brush my teeth because he knows I can't do anything without doing that first. Sigh. Looking at myself in the mirror, I'm shocked at how swollen my lips are. I know they're swollen because I know my size.

But I guess passion is pain, right?

Another bouquet of roses, white this time. Breakfast has all my favourites. I thank him as I reach for my Mimosa. I know he's laughing internally even though all I'm getting is his intense gaze.

"What are you thinking?" I ask him.

"You're handsome," he says.

I look at him, eyebrow raised, "Okay, Shakespeare."

There goes his belly deep laugh.

"I'm trying to be sweet and you're dissing me."

"I didn't diss you," I gasp, "if anything, I complimented you."

"I was about to drop some deep emotional stuff about how much I love you and how I want the world for you but forget."

I laugh. So cute! I like the dramatic side of him.

"Daddy..."

He grins.

No!

"I've enjoyed every moment shared with you."

I eye him suspiciously. "You're not dying, are you?"

He laughs, "There you go again. I must stop being sweet today."

I stuff a piece of bacon in my mouth and shrug. I'm eating so he must leave me alone. He kisses my forehead.

Sigh.

I really love this man. He is everything I could've ever asked for. I could say he is God sent. It hurts but as I've said, we enjoy the moments.

We plan on spending the entire day indoors.
My poor Kitty!

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

"Where are you?" - I text Mathonga.

He's been in Cape Town for a couple of days now and I've been home relaxing after my mini baecation.

My days spent with Muzi were the best. We laughed, spoke and just connected with each other. Obviously, he indulged in my body like there was no tomorrow. On the day we were meant to check out, he decided to enjoy me like it was the first time. We only left the hotel at seven in the evening. He dropped me off at my place and went home.

I miss him now. He's travelling. He actually asked that I come with but I politely declined. I don't want to do work things with him.

Our relationship is strictly personal. I don't want to get involved in his businesses

"The apartment, no meetings today. It seems I'll be here for another two weeks," - he responds.

"Drop location."

He's typing...

"Don't play with me like that," he says.

"Mathonga, drop location."

The location comes quickly. I know he thinks I'm playing with him but I'm not.

I'm in Cape Town!

Last night when I was talking to Muzi he suggested that I go away for a couple of days before I get too busy. His guy came through for us and Braam is the location we've settled on.

Daddy suggested that I pamper myself because when he comes back, it's work, work, work, work, work! So I took his suggestion and booked a flight to Cape Town.

It was either here or KZN and I'm not in the mood to breathe the same air as my parents. I just checked into my hotel and I'm already headed out. Mathonga's apartment is about fifteen minutes from here. Daddy forced me to rent a car, so I'm driving. He's not a fan of these e-hailing services, especially in foreign cities, as he calls them.

I don't enjoy driving but to give him a piece of mind, I do it. Cape Town is one beautiful city. It's one of my favourites in the world. I don't have much to reference to, yet, but I think it'll always be my favourite.

The apartment building he's staying in is luxurious, obviously. Seeing it from the outside, I can tell that inside is more than beautiful.

Unfortunately, I can't surprise him like I wanted to because he needs to sign me in. The security calls him, he sounds surprised but he tells them that he's coming. He better hurry because I'm parked outside, possibly holding traffic. Okay, there's no one here yet but still...

There he is. He's barefoot. I've figured he enjoys feeling the earth beneath his feet. He looks chilled - this place suits him.

He has a chat with the guard before the gate is opened and I drive in. He points to where I should park.

I can't believe that I'm here. What am I thinking!? But I'm here, so there's no turning back. He opens the door for me and I step out. Without warning, he pulls me closer. My head meets his chest and I sigh happily. Something about being in his arms right now is comforting.

He runs his hands up and down my back; I relax into him and wrap my arms around his waist.

"You're here," he whispers, almost like he is pinching himself, unable to believe that I'm here... in his arms.

I also can't believe that I'm here... in his arms.

He pulls back, looks at me and shakes his head.

"Let's go," he says taking my hand in his.

I grab my bag. This place is beautiful. It smells peaceful! I've said this before, money!!!

The elevator ride up is filled with his chuckles of disbelief and head shaking. We bump into a couple as we step out on his floor. They have a brief conversation before we go our separate ways.

Welcome home, that's what he whispers as I make my way inside. Wow! You know what TT Mbha always says? Opulence deluxe!!! This place is crazy. Charcoal, hints of colour and Bob's your uncle! I'm surprised at how well the dark colours work.

I can feel him walking closely behind me as I take in his place. Is it his? It has to be because this reads like a residential apartment building. Yep! Confirmed! There's a portrait of his mom hanging on the wall. I stop and stare at it for a bit.

"Dad is kind of obsessed with his wife. He has pictures of her everywhere. I bet he even has her image in his wallet," he says.

There is something in his voice as he says

this.

His mom is gorgeous. If I didn't know him and I were to meet her, I'd say she was younger.

He puts his hands on my shoulders. My entire body reacts. I'm surprised my knees are still intact.

"My parents have the kind of relationship that inspires me. I want that someday. I see how they miss each other when they're not around each other. Even when they're fighting, it's always in love.

Like now, dad is away on some business and mom has been sulking. If it were up to her, she'd go join him."

"Why doesn't she?"

He chuckles, "They have some agreement. I don't know much about it but ya. But he'll be back in the next coming days and he'll be dotting over her."

He kisses the side of my head.

"I can't believe you're here," he adds.

"Believe it..." This can't possibly be my voice. I sound like an abandoned cat. I have no idea

what that means but whatever.
He turns me around and again, shivers.
We look into each other's eyes. I can read his
unsaid words and it scares me.
He's not mine to read.
I shouldn't be able to make out what he is
saying without words being used. It's not
right.
"Nkosazana..."
"Mathonga..."
He steps closer, cupping my face, "I'm going
to kiss you now."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

He makes me weak.

He makes me lose a piece of my mind.

His lips land on mine and I feel my body instantly relax. It's as if he's got the key to a part of me that even I don't know about. My body and my mind are vulnerable to his command. He has a key – a very dangerous one – to parts of me that he shouldn't even have access to right now.

My heart is thudding painfully against my chest. You'd think it's because of nerves but no. It's because of want.

He sighs as he pulls back. I feel empty like I'm without a portion of me. He rests his forehead on mine and gazes into my soul.

"You're so beautiful," he whispers.

I'm blushing, "So beautiful," he adds.

I want to tell him how handsome he is but instead, I say, "Feed me."

That is met by laughter.

"Of course. I've been living off takeouts. I don't enjoy cooking for one but now that you're here, I'll cook up a storm. But we need to get some groceries."

"Let's go then."

His hands leave my body and I draw in a deep breath. He has an effect on me that I don't appreciate. I catch him, out the corner of my eye, looking at me before shaking his head.

Yeah, buddy. I feel the same way too!

This should be illegal - feeling this way. I don't have the words to describe how I feel but all I know and understand is that there is something about Mathonga. He disappears to the bedroom, I'm assuming to put on shoes.

"Let's go," he says walking back into the

room.

He grabs my bag and hand.

I enjoy the silent conversations that take place between us. Nothing said but a lot understood.

The drive to the V&A is kept company by the sounds of Mandisi Dyantyi. I smiled widely when his voice came through. Not only is his voice soothing but his messages are also powerful.

Mathonga keeps stealing glances at me, running his thumb over the back of my hand.

"Let's grab a few things and head back," he says.

Again, hand in hand.

It seems like he enjoys having my hand in his; truth is, I enjoy having mine in his as well. He keeps kissing my head and giving me booty rubs.

We're standing in line at Woolworths and he keeps teasing me, biting my earlobe, running his hand up and down my waist.

"You two make such a lovely couple," the lady behind us compliments.

Mathonga laughs, it's more of a "please tell her" kind of laugh.

"I'm going to marry her," he tells the lady. I look up at him, brow raised.

"What? I'm going to make you my wife. You know this," he says rather loudly.

Some guy whistles whilst the lady encourages him. Mathonga is just full of it! He tells the lady that she's invited to the wedding. I can't with this guy! I zone out as they continue talking about this imaginary wedding.

He seems so excited. Cute. Weirdly cute.

We pay for our groceries then head back to the car. He's still talking about this part of his life that he seems to have planned out in five seconds. I must admit though, this wedding, marriage talk is making me fuzzy. It's such a warm, intense feeling.

See, Daddy and I haven't spoken about such; it's not something that's on the cards, anyway.

The entire drive back home, chuckles, home, is filled with talks of our future together.

What happened to understanding that I have someone in my life?

I don't respond, all I do is laugh and shake my head.

I'm grateful to walk into his apartment, hopefully, he'll relax a bit. Groceries are packed and I have a glass of wine in hand. Time to watch the sexy chef get to work. What!? I've always confessed about how handsome and, coughs, weak, Mathonga makes me. I still don't like it but in this moment, I'm not fighting it.

"What made you decide to come through?" he asks.

"Honestly? I just wanted to be in your presence."

No use lying!

He pauses. He was chopping an onion. He turns around and stares at me intently.

I wish I could read him, read his thoughts and emotions. I want to know what is going through his mind. I want to be in him. I wish I could say he's looking at me lustfully but this look, this look doesn't scream lust. It

screams emotional intensity.

"I know, I know that you have a man and I want to respect that, but God you make it so hard to do that. As I've said before, I want to get to know you better and the more I talk to you, the more I want to get to know you on an even deeper and more personal level. And now you say things like this." He chuckles.

His voice is dripping honey and I could just eat it up all day. Let me pretend like I might make it through the night because at this rate, hmmmm.

"The truth is, I shouldn't be here because I feel something when I'm in your presence and it scares me because I shouldn't feel this way about another man but then again you are you, right?"

He washes his hands and makes his way toward me, still holding eye contact.

I'm awkward when it comes to eye contact; I had to learn with Daddy, it took some time but we eventually got it, but with Mathonga, man!

It just comes naturally.

He's standing in front of me. His hands rest on either side of my waist.

I shudder at his touch. It feels natural; like it was meant to be.

"Is it such a bad thing, though? I mean, why should we fight this connection?"

"I have a man, Mathonga."

My loyalty lies with him.

"And I get that. Okay, let's do this, I'm not asking you to leave him, but I'm saying give me a chance to woo you and then you can take it from there."

What a proposition!

Does Mathonga even know what kind of position he is putting me in?

I don't think he care though.

"I know this is forbidden because you have someone in your life but I can't stay away from you anymore, Nkosazana. From the moment I laid my eyes on you, from the moment I was in your presence, I knew that I wanted to have you in my life.

It's selfish of me but I want you in my life. I don't want to say you should choose me but I

don't want to die with all these feelings."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

I feel lips on my mouth. My body is still asleep and my mind is well, half asleep. I can hear somebody whispering for me to wake up while continuously placing pecks on my lips.

"Go away," I whisper.

"I'm leaving. Bath, get dressed in my clothes but don't leave. Please..."

Yho! Mathonga!

I'm conflicted. A part of me wants to say no, obviously, but the biggest part of me is shouting, but, of course, I'll be here, waiting.

"Okay," I tell him.

"Thank you," He kisses me again, "if you don't feel like cooking and making food, please order something. I left my card on the kitchen counter with the pin written on paper. Go wild. I'll see you later."

Another kiss.

I'm half asleep and half alive. His lips are awakening my body, igniting a forbidden fire.

"Okay bye." One final kiss.

I hear him leave. I should go back to sleep but it's hard to after smelling him and having his lips on mine, as brief and one-sided as it might have been. He smelled good, by the way - like bad decisions laced with adventure and possibilities of what could be.

I hate that I'm seeing something with him but after last night, denying the damn forest on fire between us would be denying God. Okay, a bit far fetched but we have a spark between us, more like a fire that I can't fight anymore.

Mathonga.

Being in his presence nourished me. Last

night was more than just him baring his soul to me. That conversation bent something in me and I guess shifted the energies for the rest of the evening. We didn't talk much but it felt as if we were more connected than we were when I first arrived.

I don't want to say I hate to admit it but there is something about Mathonga and me that I just can't quite put my finger on.

He makes me feel like me!

Obviously, my mind is looking at me, sitting on her high pedestal, judging me. I don't blame her though, I mean, I have Daddy and I'm not the kind of girl that explores.

BUT MATHONGA!!!

I grunt, covering my face with the pillow. How can I not desire and crave him when he is near damn perfect like this? Ridiculous!

You know what? I need to get up, bathe and eat. Maybe I'll forget about the handsome specimen I shared a bed with last night.

Did I mention just how comfortable his chest is?

Lawwwd!

The way his arms held onto me all night long - I don't remember waking up and realising that his arms weren't around me. At some point, I felt him placing kisses on my shoulder before falling back to sleep.

See why I'm screwed?

My phone rings; it's Daddy.

"Daddy."

"How are you, my love?"

"I'm good and you, baby?"

"I'm good, just missing you. How's Cape Town?"

Oh, Cape Town is great!

"It's amazing, the only thing missing is you," I tell him.

"Don't tempt me, I might just leave my meetings and come join you."

I giggle. One thing I appreciate about him is that he would never cancel his meetings and trips just to come to join me. One might say that is weird but I love a man that has his priorities set straight. If it's easy for you to ruin other aspects of your life for me, then I'm good. I don't want you.

"I can't wait to see you. I really miss you."

He grunts, "I miss you too, Nkosazana. I miss my lips on yours. I miss my hands on your body. I miss making love to you."

I moan. I can imagine everything he is saying and I crave it. I miss his touch. I miss screaming out his name as I reach the land of milk and honey.

"Touch yourself for Daddy, baby," he commands.

He knows his wish is my command. My hand roams my breast, giving my nipple a pinch, releasing a moan out of my mouth.

"Yes, baby. Just like that. Feel yourself for Daddy."

...down my stomach, until I reach the Honeypot. She comes alive at his voice so it doesn't shock me that she's already dripping. The second I touch my bean, my entire body shudders.

"Play with her, baby. Do it for Daddy."

He knows I'm listening to all his instructions and I'm doing just as he's saying. I run my fingers over my sleek seam and moan at the

sensation.

He groans.

I moan in pleasure as I sink a finger in, calling out to him softly.

"Yes, baby..." he says softly.

Warm, snuggly and cushy. That is his home. Just the thought of him coming back home and settling into the nest is enough to push me over the edge. I softly cry out as the moment passes. He groans; hmmm he's been busy huh!

"Fuck, Nkosazana! I can't wait to take you. You won't be able to walk the next day."

I bite my lips, "I can't wait, Daddy."

"Now, go clean yourself up and enjoy your day."

"I love you, Muzi."

"I love you too, Nkosazana."

We hang up.

Fuck!

I just had phone sex with my man, while wearing another man's shirt on his bed. What the hell is wrong with me?

Haibo!

Well, that's fucked up!

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

I took a shower, used his manly lotion then threw on his shirt and now, I'm in the kitchen cooking. I figured why not cook for him. It's not like I have anything better to do. I have on the TV in the background and some wine chilling on ice. I don't even know what time he's going to be back and I don't want to ask him because I have a feeling he'll end his commitments quickly and rush home.

Home.

Okay, so here's the thing, I've fallen, slightly, for Mathonga. The way he speaks the truth

without forcing it down my throat, the way he handles me and speaks to me with respect. He has a way of making me feel like I matter without screaming it to my face. He's slightly different from what I'm used to and I like it. I like it a lot.

Obviously, there is a part of me that is screaming at me because I have a great man in my life but the biggest part of me is screaming at me to relax and see where this goes. I know where this is going to go, I know how it's going to end. With me in between his sheets screaming out his name.

I'm not going to deny the sexual tension between us. It is there and it is almost palpable and if we don't act on it, it might just set the building on fire.

Mathonga is a beautifully, well-sculpted man. He oozes sex god vibes. Apart from the physical, we're attracted to each other emotionally, so that makes the physical look that much greater.

The door opens and he walks in. I thought he'd be out the entire day, and I tell him as

much.

"I wrapped up what I needed to quicker than I thought I would."

That's a lie and we both know it. I look at him, eyebrow raised. "Okay, fine. I needed to be in your presence, so I rescheduled most of my meetings. It's not like I'm missing out on a lot. I'll catch up."

"You know I would've still been right here when you got back later. I did promise that I wouldn't leave, so you didn't have to do that."

"Call it high school boy syndrome, but I was just too excited to see you."

I get on my toes and place a kiss on his lips; he seems taken aback a bit but he quickly recovers as he rests his hands on my ass, pulling me closer.

What the hell!?! His bulge!?!

"The stove," I murmur.

He pulls back and pecks my lips.

"What are you cooking?"

"Grilled meat and veggies," I switch the stove off, "Wine?"

"Beer."

I give him his beer and tell him to change out of his suit. He nods, drinking me in.

"You look sexy in my shirt," he comments.

I don't know why but I give him a twirl. He gives me a side smile, that sexy one that says I see you.

"I know."

He walks towards the bedroom, chuckling. His presence and scent linger in the room long after he has walked out. The thing about this guy is that I can't quite get him. I get him but at the same time, he's difficult to read. It's as if he opens the door long enough for me to try to peep in but shuts it immediately as soon as he sees my head coming in.

He's teasing me.

He's topless and barefooted, as always. I'm staring, openly and I don't care. I'm drooling. He wraps his arms around my waist and pulls me closer.

"I want to kiss you. I want to touch you. I want to feel your skin against mine and inhale your intoxicating scent. I want to be

consumed by you, "he whispers against my lips.

This is it.

This is the moment.

He gently drops his lips on mine. The kiss starts softly but slowly intensifies. The passion and need are radiating off of him. He lifts me up; I wrap my legs around his waist. The kiss is heated, and sensual.

He gently lays me down on the bed without breaking the kiss. I feel him working the buttons of the shirt.

The breeze confirms that he's managed to undo them.

He pulls back and his eyes roam down my body. I feel naked. I know I am but I feel naked. Exposed to him.

He leans back in and takes my lips on his. I pull him closer, wanting to feel the warmth of his chest on my breast. I let out a moan as his bulge comes into contact with my quim. I want him. I need him. We kiss harder and faster, our hands roaming and yearning for more of each other. He slips his pants off.

His lips leave my mouth and then find my neck, then my collar bone then travels down until he reaches my breasts. He runs his tongue over my left nipple and it immediately comes to life. He does the same with the other one; it's as if my moans fuel him.

I need him. I need him now!

He traces soft kisses down my belly; I moan and squirm under him. I suck in a breath when I feel his lips on my quim. He's not moving. I open my eyes and find him looking at it with lustful eyes.

"Beautiful," he whispers, as he separates my lips with his fingers.

He lowers his head; I hitch my breath in anticipation of the contact. It happens and I moan in satisfaction. He flicks his tongue over my clit and I lose control over my body.

I cry out, holding his head in place. I feel my clit growing harder as my wetness increases. He licks, sucks and slurps as he drinks from my well. He slides a finger in; I throw my head back.

What the fuck is this guy doing to me!?
I feel him bend his finger towards my g-spot.
It's not long before I let out a scream as my
wetness covers his finger.

Just as I recover from my high, I feel his lips
on mine. We share a hungry kiss. He slips my
shirt off. He runs his tip up and down my
sleek seam, I quiver.

"Are you good?" he murmurs against my
lips.

I nod, as I pull him closer. "Words,
Nkosazana."

"Yeeeeeeees," I drag it out.

"Good!"

I ache my back and cry out as he slides his
hard rod into my soaking quim. I throb as my
warmth envelopes him. He lets out a loud
groan, settling into his home for the night.

He thrusts, slowly, going deeper and deeper
with each stroke. I wrap my hands around
him and take in the pleasure he is serving.
I've never felt like this before. If I could, I
would pull him into me.

I take in every centimetre of his thickness.

His groans and grunts fuel me. I feel it; it's here. I release my gush, screaming in ecstasy.

"Fuuuuck," he whispers.

Our bodies merge and create magic unseen.

I guess my release sends him over the edge because he jerks and then freezes before letting out an animalistic kind of grunt.

He collapses on top of me. We're both breathless, trying to fill our lungs with air.

The sexual tension between us still hangs heavy in the room, but I guess we have the whole night to clear it out.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

He kisses my sweaty forehead then pulls me closer and rests my head on his chest. Hearing his heartbeat and how quickly it's going as we both calm ourselves down is a beautiful moment for me. I don't know why. I put my hand on his stomach and draw circles on it.

This moment is perfect.

"Surely this must be a dream and you an angel because it feels like I died and woke up in heaven," he whispers.

I giggle, "Isn't sex a sin?"

"It is, purposely."

"Then how are you referencing to heaven after playing in the dirt, you pig!"

He laughs loudly and carefree. "This is why I think I'm in heaven; you're one of a kind, Nkosazana."

"As are you, Mathonga."

He sighs. I know what he's thinking and I know I need to be thinking the same thing but I refuse to ruin this moment with thoughts of tomorrow.

"Don't think about it. Let's just be here, remember?"

He kisses my head.

"You're right. Okay, so--"

My phone rings. He reaches over and passes it to me. It's my dad.

"Hi, Dad."

"Nkosazana, I know it's late, I'm sorry for calling now but I needed to talk to you."

I sit up, "Is everything okay?"

"I need you to come home soon."

"What's the hurry? What is happening?"

"I'll explain when you get here. Please."

"Okay, fine. I'll get some time off and come through."

"Thank you."

I bid him goodnight then hang up. I've been avoiding going home; I don't think I'm ready for the conversations that we're going to engage in.

"Do you want to talk about it?" Mathonga asks, pulling me closer.

"My mother is not my biological mother," I tell him.

I found out on my last visit home but obviously, they don't know that I know. I overheard them arguing and she just blurted it out.

"She's not my child, so I shouldn't care. Tell her damn mother!" She roared.

I knew they were talking about me because I'm their only child and my name was mentioned mid-conversation.

It felt like a blow was dealt to my stomach and immediately air was sucked out of my body.

"I thought we had moved past that," Dad

said.

"Yeah well, it's kind of hard to move when she looks more and more like her every day."

"It's not her fault."

"She is her mother's daughter and she will do to someone's child what her mother did to me."

Just like that, I had been cursed for something I didn't even know about.

I've been using this time to try and process everything. I have so many questions and no one to ask. It sucks.

"I'm so sorry. I'm assuming you didn't know this fact?"

I shake my head, "I had always known that my mother, well, stepmother doesn't like me or that she had a problem with me. I just assumed that it was because she was one of those women who probably didn't want to have kids and that's why she was so hard on me or maybe she wanted the best for me but just didn't know how to articulate that in a soft manner.

Never in my wildest dreams would I have

ever assumed that she wasn't my biological mother. There was nothing about how they raised me as a couple that screamed illegitimate child, you know? Honestly didn't know and I've been gutted ever since I overheard the conversation.

I want to obviously confront them about it but I just don't know how to go about it, which is why I've been avoiding going home. I'm certain you have noticed that I have foot in mouth syndrome and I only realise that I've said something once I've said it and I don't want this to happen that way."

"I understand. Take your time and process this news before actually approaching them about it. No matter how much they ask you to come home or how much pressure they put on you put your foot down until you are in the right headspace to be in the presence."

"Yeah. You're right..."

I don't particularly enjoy dwelling on my problems or even speaking about them, so this is huge!

"Well, I guess we both have parents that are

fucked up in some way, right?"

I look up at him; he's looking at me with so much passion and intensity, I squirm under his gaze.

I clear my throat, "I thought your parents were great."

"Oh, well, they are now but that wasn't always the case. Well, in my dad's case that is. My dad used to cheat on my mom. He stopped now or well, I think he has. No, I'm certain he has because all his attention is focused on her and if he's not around he's at work and if it's not at work is with her, so there's no time for another woman in his life. But that wasn't always the case.

A few years ago I found out that he was seeing someone else and that destroyed the relationship that he and I had built over the years. You gotta understand that he's my dad and she's my mom and I love them and I never thought that one of them would step out of their marriage.

It turned out mom had already known about this and a part of me hated her for staying

after she found out but I'm not as mad as I used to be about it. I love my mother to bits and I believe that she deserves the entire world, so for him to bring someone else into their marriage and kind of disregard her like that too was a really hard pill to swallow for me.

But they worked on their marriage after he ended things with the lady and we also started rebuilding our relationship and here we are today."

"So I'm assuming you hate people who cheat?"

He keeps quiet. "I know what you thinking and I understand why but the situation is totally different."

"Don't be a hypocrite, Mathonga."

"Okay, I'm being two-faced about it, cool, but I still say the situation is different. I believe that you and I are destined to be together. Call it a feeling, or intuition or whatever, but I truly believe that we're meant to be together."

"I... Mathonga..."

"I know, okay, I know but shoot me, crucify me, nail me to the cross, it won't change how I feel about you. I'm crazy enough about you to stand on top of the roof and shout to the world how much I want to try this."

"I... You... We..." I heave a sigh, "you're coming on too strong."

He's putting himself on the table while I'm just here...

"We've just made love, how much stronger could I possibly come on?"

I grunt. I love that he says we made love and not that we had sex. I love that he sees this as more of an emotional thing and it was just a physical thing.

"You never told me why they named you Mathonga," I try to change the subject.

He laughs softly, pulling me down to lie back on his chest.

"My parents had been trying to have a child since a few months after they started dating and it wasn't happening. They even got married and it still wasn't happening. They went to doctors; tests were run and

everything but still nothing. Until one day, they decided to try the traditional route and they found out that there was interference, if I could call it that, in their trying to have a child.

The healer helped them, he worked with them for some time and they were able to finally fall pregnant with me. Unfortunately, I was the only child they were going to have and I guess to show their gratitude to their ancestors I was named Mathonga."

Now it makes sense. I've always said there was something about him and the way he carries Instagram self and how he just commands respect and how you just feel his presence when he walks into a room. Now it makes sense.

He's a special child.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

I came back three days ago and my thoughts have been on my time spent with Mathonga. The entire duration of my trip was spent at his apartment. I didn't even go back to the hotel to fetch my clothes because he had a lot of shirts that I could just parade around in. His words, not mine.

I only went back on the morning of check out to fetch my bags.

I won't lie, I enjoyed being cooped up in his apartment with him. I also got the chance to see him in action. He had a meeting via zoom.

I thought he'd put on his shirt and tie but he just threw on his Batman t-shirt and got in there. One would expect the man in the Batman shirt to be lost throughout the meeting but not my Mathonga; he looked so sexy as he spoke numbers and locations. Even when he was reprimanding a few of them, he was calm and sexy.

I had to jump him the second he closed the laptop, which I did. I pounced on him. I took his lips on mine and we created magic. He had spots that he hadn't reached the first time and he had me singing different melodies the entire time.

I think we spent most of our time together making love. Sure, we spoke, really spoke and we got to know each other but the purpose was to make sure our bodies are well acquainted as well. I miss him terribly and I feel bad because Daddy is on his way up. I need to focus on him right now and push all thoughts of sexy Mathonga aside.

I hear the door being pushed open. I hear his footsteps drawing closer. He wraps his arms

around my waist and places a curse on my shoulder. I tilt my head and give him space to play soft gentle kisses all the way up my neck before he places another one on my cheek.

"I've missed you, my love," I whisper.

"I've missed you too."

He turns me around and cups my face. The intense look on his face sends chills all throughout my body. I know this look, it's that 'I'm going to fuck your brain out' look.

I usually get it after a long trip, like now.

But I want to talk first before he rearranges my guts. I place my hands on his chest.

"How was your trip?" I ask.

"It was good."

And I know that's where it ends and I respect it. I never want him to say more than he is willing to share. One might say that makes me stupid because I need to dig but I'd rather not. I'm good with the parts that he chooses to share with me.

Muziwokhaya is an interesting man. He is a man-man. A stubborn Zulu man that often refers to himself as a bull. I know Zulu men

are stubborn, so I choose not to push him when I don't have to. I'm a chilled girlfriend, besides, I know my place in his life.

"Would you like something to eat? We can order something."

"Your company is all the food I need but some sushi as an accompaniment will do."

I chuckle at how cheesy he is. We move inside; I order his sushi and prawns for myself. He's already pouring wine for us.

He takes off his jacket and tie and then kicks his shoes off.

I was never a fan of white wine but over time I have acquired the taste. It's not as bad as I had thought it was.

"So, I spoke to Sipho," Sipho is the guy he hired to research the best spot to open my restaurant, "he says he's identified three buildings that you can rent out for the eatery. So go check them out tomorrow, decide, and then we can put down the deposit."

"Just like that?"

He takes a sip of his wine, "I would prefer it if we were able to buy the building. So once

you've made your choice, I'll get in touch with the owner and see if we can't buy the place and get it in your name."

My name? I'm doing my best not to cry but it's hard. This man loves me and he wants the best for me.

How lucky am I?

"I don't know what to say..."

"I just want you to be happy. I know the success of this eatery will make you more than happy, so we'll push and push until it reaches the top."

"You're so amazing. Thank you."

"You're the amazing one," He kisses my cheek, "have you decided on an interior designer?"

"I have. Thapelo Lekau. He's the one that did the interior for Lapeng la Rona Lodge."

"That place is heavenly. You chose a great one. Okay, get in touch with him, set up a meeting then take it from there but whatever his price is just nod. Don't do that thing where you try and feel sorry for my pocket. Use my money, baby!"

I laugh, throwing my head back. He knows I don't like spending his money that much. I appreciate that I have access to it but if never go wild wild unless he forces me.

"This will be the first and last time that I dent your pocket," I tell him.

"And the most important," he adds.

Yes, and the most important.

I must say, I'm suddenly nervous. What if this fails? Gosh, I wouldn't be able to live with the disappointment but then again, the most important thing is trying and I will die doing exactly that. Unfortunately, Daddy receives a call just as the food arrives.

"Difficult client," he says.

I understand. I won't hold it against him. He promises to come through after he sorts it out.

He leaves a deliciously deep wet kiss on my lips that leaves me craving for him.

"I'll give you that gut-shaking loving when I come back."

Yes, Dzaddddyy! I'll even put on a sexy number for him. But before that, let me jot

down everything that I need to do and push what I can today. I email Thapelo and a few other suppliers. I surf the net for more ideas for colour schemes, I'm open to changing though but I need to know what I like walking into the meeting.

Two hours later, I have meetings set and a dream burning inside of me. I'm almost there and it's because of my love.

He deserves a candlelit dinner as well as a dangerously sexy black number that he gets to rip apart!

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The first location I saw was too hidden. The point of being in Braam is for the footprint that will pass by, so the joint being tucked away doesn't work for me. The second location was okay. Nothing to write home about. But the third? My my my! You know what they say about the third time being the charm, right? I think this is it.

I'm on a video call with Daddy, excitedly showing him around the space. I can already see the vision that I have coming to life here. He smiles widely as I take him on a virtual

tour; he even throws in some ideas. That's what I love about him. As a businessman, he knows what works, especially as a man in the hospitality industry.

"It's perfect, baby," I answer when he asks if I like it.

"Then I'll chat to the owner and hear what they have to say about selling."

"You don't have to, Daddy. If all they're willing to do is rent the place out then it's fine."

"I am Muziwokhaya, I always get what I want. Just leave that to me. You just go and enjoy your meeting with Thapelo. I hope he's gay."

I chortle. What the hell?

"Daddy!!!"

"What!? I'm being honest. I get jealous over you."

Look at me blushing. He says the sweetest things when he feels like it.

"You have nothing to worry about, my love. I'm yours."

"And sometimes I ask myself how I got so

lucky. Thank you for being mine. I promise I will live my days making your dreams come true."

"I'm the lucky one. I love you, Muzi. I really do."

"You never have to convince me. I know you do."

We share a moment; no one says anything but everything is said.

"Let me get back to work. Enjoy your meeting."

"Enjoy the rest of your day. I'll let you know how much Thapelo plans on heisting from you."

He laughs. "I can't wait. Later!"

We hang up. I let the owner know that Muzi will be in touch before heading off to my next meeting. Parktown is one of my favourite places to be. It's an in-between place. Fancy, yet affordable. I love it.

I immediately spot Thapelo when I walk into the restaurant. Daddy will be very happy to know that he's very much in touch with his feminine side.

"Nkosazana, you're so beautiful."

He kisses both my cheeks. I love him already!

"As are you, darling. How are you?"

"Excited. I love working, so I always get excited when I'm meeting clients."

Oh, this is great! It means he's going to give his all to this. Daddy says people who are passionate about what they do are far better than the ones that are qualified to do the job.

We spend the next couple of hours going through ideas and by the time we conclude our meeting, we have an idea of the direction we're headed. He promises to send me an invoice as soon as he gets to the office.

I'm squealing. I'm so excited, that I don't know how to contain myself. I can't wait for everything to come to life.

The one thing I love the most about living alone is the ability to walk around the apartment naked. I love being free and letting the titties hang. I've been dancing and

pacing up and down, jotting ideas into my notepad. It feels surreal.

"I miss you" - a text from Mathonga.

I smile. I miss him too. I haven't spoken to him all day. I immediately call him back.

"Nkosazana," he sulks.

"Why are you sad?"

"Because I miss you. Come back to Cape Town."

"How about you come home?"

"Are you my home?"

"I could be," I respond.

I can't believe I just said that.

"I'd like you to be. Be my home, Nkosazana." Mathonga!

I'm flushed! What is this guy doing to me?

"How was your day?" I ignore his request.

He chuckles, "It was good, meetings weren't bad. And yours?"

"It was great."

I fill him in on my plans and everything I've been working on, leaving out Daddy's involvement, of course.

He doesn't have to know how my project is

being financed because it has nothing to do with him.

"What!? Why didn't you tell me this before? Congratulations, baby! I'm so excited for you. I know you're going to do an amazing job. When does it open? Actually, when are you having a prelaunch, special tasting thing?" he asks.

I love how excited he sounds.

It makes me feel all fuzzy and marshmallow like.

"I'll probably have that soon. I'll let you know when. Thank you for your excitement." Will I invite him though? I don't think so, but let's go with it for now.

"You know you're my favourite human being, I'll always hype you up."

Is it possible to meet someone and have them become such an important part of your day in such a short period of time? I reckon it is.

"I miss you, Mathonga," I tell him.

Fighting this isn't helping anyone.

"I'll be back in a couple of days. I can't wait for the welcome home greeting," he says.

Oh and a greeting he will get. I can't wait to see him!

CHAPTER TWENTY

"The owner is willing to sell."

I almost fall out of my seat.

"What!? How?"

He smiles, "I told you, I always get what I want."

Smug!

"You're so special!"

I place a kiss on his lips. We're at the club, in the office. He needed to sort something out and I felt like a night out, so I got myself ready before my time and well here I am. I'm also here this early because I need to thank

the man in kind.

This morning I received an email from Thapelo telling me that he received payment, in full.

Muziwokhaya doesn't do down payments apparently. He's got a fresh ego and I like it. So this means operation eatery is underway. The owner said we can start with fittings anytime.

Muzi suggested that we get in an engineer before we started anything, just to make sure that we don't need to restructure the building or whatever, I honestly don't remember what he said. It's kind of hard to keep all the information in while he is inside of me.

He enjoys doing that, by the way; having a conversation with me while he transcends me into parallel universes that I can only make up in my mind. He says I give him authentic responses while my eyes are shut. I don't know about that. All I can think about is how he is scratching the itch so damn deliciously!

"Have you spoken to chef Russo? You need to

find a head chef and a sous chef."

"He said he'd help. I also need to look for staff."

"I'll contact the agency. So we have chefs and staff sorted. Have the suppliers responded?"

"Yes, they have. Once we have the set menu, we'll be able to discuss discounts according to quantity and all of that."

"You seem to have everything under control. I'm so proud of you."

Hearing those words from him always makes me smile. I've only ever heard them from my dad in the past, so hearing them outside makes me happy.

Speaking about dad, I've decided to go home and get this over and done with. I'm not sure how I'm going to handle what the weekend is going to bring, but I will take it on the cheek and offer the other if need be.

I watch as he goes through his files, admiring what an incredible man he is. I never get to see him in boss mode a lot so this is a treat for me. He has on his glasses and that don't fuck with my face.

I remember the last time I loved before daddy come along. We had an okay relationship. And I say okay because now that I've tasted love in its fullness and continue to taste it, I know that what we had was just a moment of lust camouflaged as love.

Anyway, we kind of rushed into things. I met him I was taken by him and we just jumped into things.

Now I'm a girl with a healthy sexual appetite, I enjoy snacking and I'm not ashamed of it. So that's what we did a lot, we snacked and we ate and that's the only thing we did was whenever we were together. We never had conversations of substance; we never had conversations about the present, never about the future. We just didn't talk and I didn't realise that until after he wasn't sexually attractive to me anymore.

We ended things and that was that. I promised myself that I would never be with a shallow man again and I have stuck to that promise.

Muzi and I can spend hours just talking. He's

attentive and he offers solutions where he can, which is everywhere. The man is intelligent. He's knowledgeable and he's wise. I've never met anyone quite like him.

"Where's Thabisile?"

"Oh, you mean Brenda?"

He laughs, "You'll find yourself friendless because of that."

She hates her second name with a passion. Apparently, her grandmother gave her that name. She says it makes her sound older than she is. I think it suits her but who am I?

I'll just use it to annoy her.

"She'll be fine. She's good. Still travelling. I have no idea where she is right now."

My friend is quite resourceful but she also comes from wealth, so she has access to these things. She's currently globetrotting with her boyfriend. They've been together for about five years and it's time they settle now. I'd like to be a bridesmaid before I expire.

"Do you want to travel?"

He leans back into his seat and looks at me intensely.

"With you?" I ask with laughter covering my words.

"Yes."

"Muzi, don't ask such questions. Anyway, are you joining me tonight?"

He shakes his head and I know it's not to respond to my question.

"Nkosa-"

"I'll see you tomorrow then." I pick up my bag and make my way out of his office.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

I see him walking towards me with a curious smile on his face, shaking his head. I have a board in hand with his surname plastered in bold. I'm a little extra but he did dare me to be bold, so here I am.

He makes pushing that trolley so sexy. He looks delicious in a jean and a plain white top. I think the simplest outfits are the ones that make a person pop even more. Well, they do that for Mathonga.

"Are you my chauffeur for the day?"

"Yes, Sir, I am. May I take your trolley?"

He shakes his head, "I'll be good. You just lead the way."

"Very well, right this way."

I have no idea why this has me so excited. I'm trying my best to keep my smile at bay; I'm on the clock here. I can't be smiling for clients.

We get to the car and I open the boot; he puts his bags in. I then open the passenger door for him and he slides in. He said he's not sitting at the back.

I don't know how many times I'm going to heave a sigh and call out his name but Mathonga!

He keeps stealing glances at me but he doesn't say anything. The moment we hit the highway he turns to look at me, placing his hand on my thigh.

"Nkosazana."

I swear the butterflies in my stomach could fill up the entire sky, covering it, leaving it with no light. If I could, I'd pull over and take a moment to breathe. I can do that right? I mean, he knows the kind of effect he has on

me.

"Mathonga..."

"You look quite alluring. I'm captivated."

I steal a glance at him. The look in his eye is even deadlier than the last lustful look I received from him, which was on the morning of my departure.

I was already on my way out because I needed to check out but he gave me this look and I knew I was done for. He made love to me on the carpet, played my body like it was his to stroke and loved on every inch of my skin like it was made for him. He left a piece of himself in me.

Right now, he looks like he wants to press pause on the world and ravage me.

"I'm driving, stop making me blush."

"I want to make you gush," he says so seductively I almost gush.

"Mathonga, stop!"

He chortles. I hate him!

The rest of the drive home is intense with him just staring at me. Listen to me saying home like we live together. It's quite funny

that I had never really thought about being with a guy 24/7 until this one. I know, I know it's forbidden but here we are and well, I wouldn't mind living with him at some point in my life.

Oh shit!

That says a lot about a lot of things. No! Scratch that idea out of your damn mind. I help him with his bags but he insists on me only carrying his laptop bag. Such a man. I flop myself on the couch while he takes the bags to the bedroom.

"Home sweet home!" he screams as he walks back in

He settles next to me, throws his hand around my shoulder and kisses my head. I snuggle in and make myself comfortable in his arms.

He's so comfortable.

He chuckles, "I can be your comfort all day, if you agree to be my home."

I guess I said that out loud.

"I love how your mouth always independently tells me what you're thinking

without any assistance from you."

"I bet you do."

"Of course I do. It makes it that much more special because then I know that it's honest and innocent."

"You just like it when I make a fool of myself."

"No, I like it when you tell me how you feel. I want to know how close I am to the barrier."

"Quite close," I say, "close to drilling through it and it scares me."

He draws in a breath, and holds it in for the longest time before releasing it.

"It scares me how much you've drilled through my walls in such a short period of time, Nkosazana. After my previous relationship, I didn't know if I would ever find someone who would make me feel alive again and here you are.

It scares me just how much power you have over me. I know I rarely show it but I freak out when I'm in your presence because damn it, woman, you are something else.

Your energy and aura are so powerful. You're

light personified. You're love multiplied. I know you scared of saying it but I feel it. I feel it. You've fallen for me."

"Of course I have but it doesn't take away from the fact that this is wrong. Not because I've fallen for you but because I don't know how I'm going to choose you."

"Just close your eyes and choose me. We're meant to be, even a blind person can see that. Anyone that stands next to us can feel our connection."

But how do I admit to myself, LOUDLY, that I want both these men in my life? How do I justify my feelings?

Look, I know where my future lies. And I know that that's a decision I have to make one of these days before things get out of hand.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

Okay. This is the hardest thing I've had to do. I'm home. I arrived last night. Dad saw me when I arrived but I promised that we would talk in the morning. Today is morning and I don't feel like getting out of bed but I guess the quicker we talk, the quicker I can get out of here.

I need to take a shower before facing the world. Who would've thought that I would have to deal with this amount of drama in my life? I just hope it doesn't alter my life in the worst possible way.

I find my father and his wife in the living room. Has this tension always been around and I was just oblivious to it or is it a now thing?

"Good morning."

"Nkosazana."

"Morning, princess, how are you?"

"Good and you guys?"

"Good good. Breakfast?"

"No thanks, Dad," I sit on the couch opposite them, "I'd like to talk. You did say that we need to talk."

He clears his throat, "Yes, uhm, firstly I want to start off by telling you just how much we love you. You... you were a dream to raise and I'm honoured to be your father. I am honoured to hold your hand through life and watch you grow and spread your wings.

You see, the thing is that," I can see how difficult this is for him, so I'll just put him out of his misery, "you are -"

"I'm not Mama's biological child," I jump in. They both stare at me, eyes popping out. They weren't expecting that.

"How? How did you know."

"I overheard you talking. I'm not mad about anything of that. I'm just wondering why I was never told and why I was taken in if I wasn't wanted."

"It's a bit complicated," dad says.

"We have time and I'm sure I'm smart enough to understand."

"Your mother and I had been dating for years and-"

"Which mother?" I cut him off.

He sighs, "Sizakele."

Okay, stepmother.

"Hmmm. Go on."

"We hit a hurdle in our relationship and we decided we should take a break from each other to think about what we wanted. So we went our separate ways. And that's when I met your birth mother.

Our relationship was quick and passionate," his wife nudges him. I guess talking about her isn't part of the plan, "anyway, after a few months Sizakele and I got back together and we quickly got married. Months later, I

found out that your mother fell pregnant and she kept it away from me because I got married.

When you were born, Sizakele and I decided it would be best for us to raise you together. So we took you and your mother stayed away."

"Because she wanted to or because you forced her to?"

He stares at me. It's either he is about to lie to me or tell me the truth. I hope the latter is on his mind.

"She..."

"She didn't want to know you," my stepmother says.

"Sizakele!"

"No! She wants to know why she didn't know her and we promised to tell her the truth. She didn't want you because she couldn't have the man that put you in her. Anyway, she's dead now, so it doesn't matter."

For some reason that knocks the air out of my lungs.

She's dead? So why are they even talking

about her?

"Your mother was sick and she wanted to meet you, princess. That's why I kept asking you to come back. She passed away this week and she'll be buried next weekend," dad says. I'm supposed to process all this information in one sitting?

My stepmother has a smirk on her face. I don't understand why. I thought she was always tough on me because she just wanted the best for me but it turns out she hated me. What a shocker!

I just need a second. A moment, so I get up and rush to my room, making sure to lock the door. My heart has just been ripped out of my chest.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

"I'm not attending the funeral," I tell him. He repositions, pulling me to completely lie on top of him. He draws patterns on my back, forcing me into a state of relaxation.

When I arrive early this morning I was a mess. I drove straight here from home. I laughed at myself because the first place I thought of coming was here. The first person I thought of calling was Mathonga. He's become such a big deal in my life, it's crazy. When I called him, I couldn't even speak in between my sobs. Thankfully he was able to

make out that I was downstairs and he came rushing down. He picked me up and held me until we got to the bedroom where he took my clothes off and slipped me into his t-shirt before putting me under the covers and spooning me.

He allowed me to cry and cleanse my soul. He said nothing; he just held me tightly until I had no tears left. Even after I was done crying, he didn't ask me what was wrong. He told me to sit tight and left the bedroom. When he came back he had a cup of hot chocolate - homemade, might I add. He then ordered breakfast for us; still he didn't ask me anything.

He put on some cartoons and we watched those while we had our breakfast. He cleared everything then came back and held me; still didn't ask me anything. And I appreciated that.

I appreciated the fact he was just there for me without even knowing what the problem was. Often, people want to be there for us when they know why we need the emotional

support. I guess we're a bit fake in that sense as humans. We can't just put ourselves aside for a second, the ego still needs to be involved even when the ones we claim to care about need to cleanse their souls in our presence. Maybe that's why so many people choose to die inside instead of crying out.

Anyway, I fell asleep in his arms and when I woke up, I was still in his arms. I told him what happened and he didn't offer a solution, he didn't try to make me feel better, he just listened before kissing me. That kiss obviously led to our souls connecting as our bodies exchanged sweat. I've never felt this kind of connection before and it's scary.

"If you don't want to go, you shouldn't be forced to. It's about you at the end of the day. Do what is best for you."

"You don't think I'm being selfish?"

"How is putting yourself first being selfish? We've normalised considering every else's feelings and putting our own aside that when someone actually decides to put themselves first we think it's selfish. It's not."

"But she did give birth to me."

"Loyalty is not blood. Just because we share the same blood, it doesn't mean we're loyal to each other," he says.

He's right about that. Brenda is the most loyal person in my life and we're just water.

"Thank you for being you and being so awesome."

He chuckles, "You bring out this side of me. I haven't been in touch with it for a while, so thank you."

"Why me?" I blurt out, "look, I know it's a stupid question but why me? Even after knowing that I have someone, you're willing to stick around and fight for me."

"It makes me seem stupid, right? But I'm not. I wasn't supposed to go to that Naked Truth night thing, my friend convinced me to tag along only to ditch me at the last second.

I was livid and I was just about to walk out when I saw you. You know that movie moment where everything slows down when the man sees this gorgeous girl walking in? That's exactly what happened.

I got goosebumps and breathing became an impossible task but I soldiered on and when you kind of dissed me as you snapped at me, I was taken. I knew that I needed to get to know you. I knew that I just had to try. I'm not big on prayer sometimes but I prayed internally and when you gave me your numbers, I prayed again, thanking God for the moment.

I truly believe that you're it for me. We're IT for each other. I'm not going to give up," he says the last part in a whisper.

My stomach churns and my heart leaps out of my chest. I don't even know how to respond to that.

Mathonga is barring his soul to me, and I feel it deep in my core.

My phone pings, I reach over for it. Daddy is calling.

"I need to take this," I say sliding out of the covers.

"Daddy."

"Hey. Can I come over? I need you."

I left Mathonga's and grabbed some food for Daddy. I'm quite full. Stomach full but I can still go a few rounds with dzaddy! I take a shower quickly and then wait for him to arrive.

He sounded a bit out of it over the phone and I know when he gets like that all he wants is sex. Rough sex, which I gladly bend over and take.

The only thing your man should break is your back and not your heart and daddy has been doing a stellar job that that.

There's a knock at the door; it's him. I open, he looks like hell. He walks in and goes straight to the fridge. He's drinking the wine straight from the bottle. Okay...

Must have been a shitty day!

"What happened?" I ask him.

He takes another sip and grunts.

"Someone stole from me but I'm working on it."

He does away with his jacket, tie and shirt as

he makes his way towards me.

"Strip," he commands.

There is nothing to strip out of, just my gown which I let slide to the ground.

He puts his hand around my neck, pulling me in for a kiss - hard and fast. He picks me up and pushes me against the wall.

Muzi isn't one to always speak about his pain, so whenever he needs to release, I take it. I allow him the chance to be what he needs to be in that moment - a beast.

... And a beast he was.

My cunt is painful, probably swollen. I reach down and touch, yep. Swollen. Tonight he was something that I had never seen before but I'm not complaining as long as he got his moment of release.

"I'm sorry if I went too hard on you. I couldn't hold back plus you were just so tight and so wet, I lost control. I'm sorry."

"It's okay, baby. I enjoyed it."

Aside from the swelling and painful back, I enjoy it when he gets rough. Don't get me wrong I love making love to him. I love it

when he's gentle and always first things in my ear while he takes me but I also enjoy it when he's a beast and he doesn't care about how hard he goes.

It's not a secret that I enjoy some hard rod magic sometimes; it keeps the blood levels low, or something like that. Its' not proven by science but I'll back my theory any day!

"Someone who has access to the company funds thought it smart to dip their fingers into my cookie jar."

"Do you know who it is?"

"We suspect the accountant is working with someone in I.T."

"That's hectic, I'm sorry baby. I wish I could offer more than just my sympathy."

"Your presence is more than enough. anyway, let's not talk about my depressing money issues, let's talk about your trip home. How was that?"

I sigh. I fill him in on everything that happened while I was home, including my decision not to go to my biological mother's funeral. I honestly don't believe that I need

closure from anything because I didn't know the woman.

I didn't know she existed up until a couple of weeks ago and even then I didn't know who she was until a few days ago so she didn't have enough of an impact on my life to warrant my going to her funeral.

"Sometimes we make decisions thinking that they are the best decisions at that time when we make them but unfortunately in future they have consequences. I believe that your mother thought that she was making the right decision when she gave you up to your father and your stepmother.

I doubt there's any woman out there who would just leave their child and agree to not be part of their life just because they wanted to live their own life. Sure, there could have probably been some other way around the situation but this was it, this was the decision that they made and there's nothing we can do to change it.

However, I do feel that it is important for you to go to her funeral because as much as you

didn't know her and as much as she wasn't in your life, she is the woman whose womb you nested in for 9 months and that has significant importance because you wouldn't be here if it wasn't for her."

"But Muzi..."

"I know, baby but I'm looking at this with your best interests at heart. I know you, I know that somewhere along the lines it's going to eat at you that you didn't go but her goodbye. You going to start asking your dad about her and he's going to start giving you the answers that you need and you deserve and somewhere it's going to eat at you that you weren't there in her last moment because that's just who you are and it's not a bad thing, baby it really isn't. So go and just say goodbye."

He knows me. I sometimes kick myself for being such a good person. I wish it was a quality that one could turn off like a tap but unfortunately, this is me for life.

"I sometimes hate how wise you are," I say.

"Only sometimes?"

"All the time!!!"

He laughs, a deep belly roar. We remain intertwined, soaking in each other's warmth and love.

"What happened that day at the office?" he asks.

Huh!? I know what he's talking about but I just don't understand why he's asking me about that.

Honestly, I just had a moment of realisation. That's it.

"I was in my feels, I'm sorry I just left like that."

We've spoken a number of times since that moment and for him to bring it up now is questionable.

"I understand, I just wish there was something I could do. Change something. Maybe you'd be happier."

"I am happy with you. Don't ever doubt that. God, you make me so happy."

He kisses my cheek, "As I always say, I will always give you my best because you deserve all the happiness in the world. All of it..."

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR

I find it sad that the one time someone has a whole lot of people there for them is at their funeral. It's something that I've observed over the past couple of years in my life.

I've been to quite a number of funerals, unfortunately and they all had one thing in common; they all had an overflowing amount of guests. It's like the person we were laying to rest had a community by their side when they needed it.

But that was never the case.

We like to show face when people don't need

it anymore. I don't know if it's because it makes us feel better or if it's because our ego craves the moment to be seen by everyone else, to say that I was here. Whatever it is, we need to work on it and change our ways.

It's the same as when we see someone whose life is completely wasted now and acting like we actually care.

People are so ego-driven that it's killing our society. We need to get off the horses we're on and learn how to live together and actually be human.

I decided to come to my mother's funeral. I didn't want to live with regrets. I spotted my dad and his wife sitting in front, I'm okay at the back. I'm not family or anything so I don't see the point.

When I told both Muzi and Mathonga that I had decided to come here, they both jumped and offered to accompany me.

I needed to do this on my own. Having either of them by my side would've defeated the point of this exercise.

The service goes on and everyone has all

these great things to say and I can't comment on anything they're saying because she is a stranger to me. I actually don't even know why I'm here. I shouldn't have come here. What was the point?

It was a futile exercise! I admit but I can't just up and leave because who does that?

So I will sit through this and see where it goes. The speeches go on and the tears get louder and louder. I feel like a bad person for not shedding a single tear.

But I can't.

Who would I even be crying for? A person I just found out about?

Maybe if she was a mother to me then I would have expressed some sort of emotion.

As the procession moves to the cemetery, I have the right mind to remain behind and slip out. But I don't; instead, I get into my car and follow them.

Remind me again why I'm here? I suck!

The graveside procession goes on and as they go to throw the soil into the grave, I can't help but wonder if she knows that I'm here. It

shouldn't bother me but it kind of does. I don't know.

I don't want to be in my feels. I really don't.

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

Thapelo and his team have done a fantastic job at transforming this place. It looks like I've been transported into a parallel universe. You wouldn't even say that it was just concrete and depression just a few weeks ago.

It's come to life and it's ready for the work to see it.

We settled on the use of natural lighting during the day so the entire side wall is glass. We used a lot of natural, warm colours just to give the space a homely feeling. Speaking

about it and actually seeing it are two different things.

It's incredible and I'm in love.

We're nearing closer and closer to the finish and I'm nervously excited. To see my dream unfold right before my eyes is something I could have only dreamt of but now it's reality, slowly sinking in.

We conducted interviews for staff last week and we'll be making calls in the coming week then we'll have training for a week.

I felt it was important to train my staff because good customer service isn't embedded into our bloodstream. It's not something we're born with. As someone who has experienced bad customer service a couple of times, I don't want my patrons to go through that at my establishment. Obviously, when a customer is wrong, we will address it as such because I don't believe that whole the customer is always right notion.

There is absolutely no one person that can always be right and the fact that we have a rule that gives people the right to constantly

think that they are makes me mad and I don't easily get mad.

I don't think I get mad at all.

Like now, I'm supposed to be lashing out, acting out because of this secret that was kept from me all my life but I'm not. I'm chilled. A little hurt, but chilled.

It's been a week since the funeral and Dad has called a couple of times. I haven't answered any of his calls though. I just need time to process everything. One thing I know I have a mother, next thing I have a mother and a stepmother, next thing my mother has passed away and we're laying her to rest and I have siblings from her other marriage.

Oh yes, she got married and had children - not a child, children!

On my way to the funeral I was thinking about everything Daddy had said and a bit of it made sense - sometimes people make decisions thinking they're for the best - it was sinking in and I was making peace with thinking that maybe she felt I was better off with Dad and his wife.

But then I saw the kids.

She had four after me. A whole four that she raised and took care of while I was left in the care of someone who wasn't her.

I got mad. Okay, maybe not mad. I was hurt. I still am. The fact that she didn't try and make contact with me all these years and only chose to reach out as she was about to kick the bucket told me where she placed me in her life.

I was a non-factor. She didn't care about me and was only probably reaching out to clear her conscious. I'm cut up but it's whatever, I guess. Crying over her isn't going to change anything.

Thapelo walks in; he looks pleased with himself. I would be too if I had managed to pull off what he has.

"Are you happy?" he asks.

"Are you kidding me? I'm more than happy! You've done more than I thought you would. I know we had a vision but this surpasses everything we put on paper."

"I aim to please. I'm happy if you're happy."

More than happy!

I take the place in one more time, walking around, feeling the furniture. I stop and look up at the signage. ZEE's highlighted in luminous colours.

I wanted to keep the eatery about me without it being too much about me, so ZEE's was perfect. I can't believe that in a few short weeks we will be opening our doors to the world.

I'm honestly still in awe of all of this. I can't believe that all of this is mine. I have a restaurant. I have an entire business and employees and equipment. I need someone to pinch me

"This just got delivered for you," Thapelo says handing me a basket.

Daddy!

We have champagne and an envelope.

"Super proud of you and your will to push through. Here is to creating something that will be around for generations to come.

I hope this little gift puts a smile on your face."

The place, the building is under my name. He bought it for me. I knew he was but seeing it written on paper, in black and white makes me so emotional. This is mine. This is my dream!

He saw the potential in me and pushed me to realise that it can happen for me. He loved me so much that he wanted me to be independent outside of his finances.

I video call him. I want to pop the bottle with him.

"My restauranteur."

The smile on his face makes me emotional. He's proud of me.

"I can't pop this bottle without the driving force behind this dream."

"It's all you. You were and still are the driving force behind the dream, I just stood behind you cheering you on. I'm so proud of you. The place looks fantastic."

Oh, Daddy! He's such an amazing man and I'm grateful to have him by my side.

"Right? I can't believe it."

I think I'm going to say I can't believe it for

the next five years.

"Enjoy your success, baby. You deserve it."

I plan on doing so!

I can't wait for this new step!

I am about to show the world who I am and I can't wait!

I deserve all of this. All this goodness, I worked hard for it and I should enjoy it.

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

I'm having the tasting in the next coming week and I'm so nervous. Chef K and I along with the rest of the team have been working tirelessly to ensure that everything is ready by then. The eatery opens four weeks from now and I cannot wait for that moment.

It was supposed to open in two weeks but we pushed the opening date back because of marketing. Muzi wanted to get as many people in there as possible. He likes doing things big. But I must say, his contacts have come in handy.

The man practically knows everyone. And if he doesn't know the person then he knows someone who knows them. When I grow up, I want to be like him. I want to have contacts upon contacts on file. If I continue to push and work hard I will.

Chef K, the head chef, was recommended to me by Chef Russo. He said he was one of his apprentices and he knew he could do amazing work here at Zee's and I agree. The guy is magic. The menu we managed to come up with is going to have people biting their fingers off.

We might even give Russo some competition. I kid but we're that good. K is that good.

"Pack a weekend bag," he says.

"We're spending the weekend at your place?"

"Something like that. Hurry now."

Argh, I was planning on getting some work done. Daddy is away for the week, so I wanted to be ready for all his questions when he

comes back. He said he's going to quiz me on business as well as everything that has to do with the eatery.

I still find it very admirable that he still invested in my baby. It warms my heart and I will never, not even for a single moment, take it for granted.

Mathonga walks into the bedroom with a glass of juice in his hand. He arrived here just as I got here from the eatery. I wonder when he works because he's always here.

"Where are your parents?" I ask.

"Away," He smiles, "they're always travelling."

"Their marriage must be fun."

"It is. Mom is at her happiest and it's all because Dad is a present husband and he gives her if she wants. She is literally a spoilt wife. Like this trip, she just sucked it out of her thumb and he made it happen. This is what I want to do for you. I want to spoil you. I want to give you the soft life that you so greatly deserve. I want to give you peace. I want to give you everything that you ask

for," he says.

All I can do is smile. My heart and soul are doing much more than that. They hear what he is saying. They hear where he is going with this. It should scare me but it doesn't. Instead, it brings me joy and hope. Hope of a future with him.

I'm done packing. He grabs my bag while I lock up and we head out.

"Nkosazana," Themba greets, sadly.

"Are you okay?" I ask him.

He hasn't been himself this past week and today it just seems worse. He forces a smile on his face.

"I'll be fine. Thanks for caring."

"If you need to talk, I can listen."

"I appreciate that but I doubt your boyfriend will take kindly to you entertaining other men."

I could be wrong but I swear I hear bitterness in his words.

"We'll talk when I come back. I hope whatever you're going through passes," I give his hand a squeeze,

"sharp."

Mathonga opens the door for me. I love how gentlemanly he is. I love how soft he is with me. I just love how he treats me.

"What was that about?" he asks.

"He's going through something, probably woman stuff. You guys get dribbled in relationships."

He bursts into laughter.

"And you don't?"

"No," I scrunch my nose, "I'm Nkosazana, I don't get dribbled."

Whoa! I sound like Daddy! I guess his ego has rubbed off on me.

"Of course, you don't. I don't plan on dribbling you."

He takes my hand in his and kisses it.

One thing about Mathonga, I feel everything he says. He didn't have to tell me that he is serious in order for me to believe him. My soul just believes him.

I don't respond to that because we're still in a bit of a tricky situation and I don't want to give him hope. The entire drive is filled with

horrible singing and loud laughter. It's such a calm and beautiful moment.

We drive into an estate; within five minutes of driving in, we're parked outside one of the most architecturally beautiful houses I've got ever seen.

"Where are we?"

"Family hide-out spot. It's just a couple of minutes outside of Joburg."

He holds my hand as we make our way in. Double volume ceiling! A dream! The foyer - is that what it's called? It's amazing! The spiralling staircase has to be the highlight of the entrance.

"My mom saw this on a property website and loved it and obviously, Dad bought it for her."

I chuckle. His mom really is a spoilt wife

"That she is," he responds.

I can't believe how I keep slipping up in his presence. Oh well.

There are pictures of his mother everywhere. I've figured his dad is really obsessed with his mom and I love it.

Men aren't always forthcoming with their emotions and feeling and to see how much his mom is loved makes me blush on her behalf.

The house is out of this world. It's gigantic but still homely as well. It's perfect.

I've changed out of my outfit and slipped into one of his t-shirts - my favourite outfit.

We're sitting on the couch, cuddling. I enjoy my moments of silence with Mathonga. I feel like I leave more than I do when we talk. Weird.

"Do you want kids?" I ask him.

We've never spoken about the future before.

"Depends."

"On?"

"Whether they come with you as their mother or not."

There he does again, making me blush out my ass!

Mathonga always knows what to say to shut me up. I always lap up everything he says and only because my soul knows he means it.

In the few months that I've known the man,

I've learnt that he never says things just to say them. He speaks truth and softly, in such a way that your heart and spirit have no choice but to acknowledge and accept it.

"If we do this, we do it for life, right?" I find myself saying.

He pushes me up and pulls me to straddle him. He cups my face and gazes into my soul... deep into my soul.

"Life is the only thing I see with you. I want to come home to you. I want your face to be the first thing I see when I wake up and the last thing I see before I drift off to sleep.

I want to cook with you and for you and discover new recipes together. I want to be goofy and stupid with you. I want to laugh at things and people with you.

I want to build with you. I want to have children with you. I want to laugh at your frustration when you have a showdown with our daughter. I want to wipe your tears when it all gets too much. I want to smile with you when the load gets lighter. I want to be your go-to guy for everything.

I just want to be with you."

"I... Mathonga..."

"I love you, Nkosazana."

CHAPTER TWENTY SEVEN

"Let's spend the night at the penthouse." I texted Daddy earlier and as the hour approaches, I'm nervous.

We haven't spent time there in a while. We used to hide out there whenever we wanted to get away from the noise of a lot of things. Plus, it's a special place for us.

Whenever he has something romantic planned, he takes me there. The one time he transformed the space into a walk-in flower shop. I was speechless, I cried. I wept and he had held me while laughing at me.

I can't believe that that is where we're going to put an end to our journey.

Yes, I've chosen. I choose Mathonga. I feel giddy as I say that. Mathonga makes me imagine and feel like I can have everything that I want, everything that I've dreamt of.

It's him I want to spend all of eternity with.

I know that it feels like I used Muzi and now that I have this new shiny toy, I'm tossing him aside. But if I'm being honest with myself, what I feel for Mathonga and what I feel for Muzi are two different things. Mathonga holds more of my soul than Muzi does.

The weekend I spent with Mathonga made this decision easier for me. Well, harder but easier.

I arrive at the penthouse; daddy is already here. He doesn't say anything, he just pulls me into his arms and holds me. I think he can feel the energy is different but he probably thinks it's just stress on my end.

"Would you like a massage?"

He never asks.

"I'd appreciate one."

We make our way into the bedroom and strip naked. Muzi gives the best massages, hands down. I moan in appreciation as his hands work my back.

"You like my ass."

He chuckles, "I won't lie, I do. It's sexy as hell," he says.

He's rubbing up on it, squeezing it and spanking it. He says it's his crown spot, whatever that means.

"Thank you, Muzi."

I sit up. He rests his head in his hand.

"For?"

"Everything you have done for me. Everything you're doing for me. Thank you for loving me. You've been so good to me, in all aspects. I have a business because of you. I have love unexplainable because of you. I'm happy because of you. You've honestly been the best yes I have ever said."

He smiles, kind of blushes.

"As I've said before, I might not be able to love you like you deserve to be loved but I

love you and you need to know that. You've brought something into my life that could never be taken away. Thank you for the happiest days of my life. You've made this uninspiring old chap very happy. I love you and I honour your presence in my life."

I lean down and take his lips in mine. I'm grateful for his presence and lips, obviously. This is it.

"We need to talk about something," I say.

I know he knows that this is about to turn into a heavy moment. His eyes look sad. I hate that I'm about to break his heart.

I never thought we would get here but here we are.

The doors ping open; we pull apart quickly. Who is here? No one ever comes here. Shit! I hope it's not...

He dresses up. I quickly put on his shirt while he rushes out to go check.

"I'm not staying, I parked out front. I just needed you to sign this."

That voice... I know it. I don't know why but I find myself slowly making my way into the

living area.

"Thanks, son. You're doing an amazing job with everything," Daddy says.

Son? Son?

"So, when are we meeting your girl?"

"It's a bit complicated at the moment but hopefully soon."

"You're quite taken huh?"

"I think you'll understand why when you meet her. She's incredible."

It's him.

He looks up and confusion draws on his face.

"Nkosa... What? What... What are you doi... What's going on here?"

Daddy looks at me then his son and back to me.

"You're cheating on mom? Again? With my girl!?"

"Your girl!?" Daddy asks.

"Wow! This is the guy you were talking about? My dad, Nkosazana!" Mathonga roars.

"I didn't-"

"Know he's my dad, of course."

"Can someone tell me what is happening here?" Daddy says.

"I'm out."

He steps into the elevator and the doors shut before I can even make my way around the couch. I slip into my jeans and press the button, impatiently waiting for the elevator. It pings open and I make my way in.

Come on... Come on...

I'm downstairs. I spot him just as he is about to get into his car.

"MATHONGA, WAIT!" I shout.

I know he doesn't have to but I need him to give me a chance.

"What?"

"I didn't know he was your dad."

"He's old enough to be your dad."

"Don't judge me! You don't get to judge me!"

I wipe the tears that escape my eyes even though I told them to stay at bay.

"I don't have time for this."

He opens the car door.

"Mathonga, please..."

"Why should I even listen to anything you

have to say?"

"Because I love you," I tell him, "I know the situation is fucked up but I love you. I've fallen in love with you and I don't want to be without you."

He pauses; I love him. He heard me and he believes it. I've been trying to fight it but I love him. I love him so much and losing him would kill me. I can't lose him.

"Yeah but you've fucked my dad, so there is no way this could ever work."

His words knock the breath out of me.

"Please... I choose you. I choose you, Mathonga. I want to be with you. I want to marry you. Please don't go..."

He looks at me; I can see the struggle, he wants to come to me but at the same time, he doesn't want.

My tears fall down rapidly.

"Mathonga, please..."

He shakes his head, gets into his car and drives off.

CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT

Daddy is sitting on the couch sitting on his scotch. His face says it all. I settle next to him, hoping that this conversation will be calm. It wasn't supposed to go down like this. Heck, no one could've guessed that it would. I'm so confused by all of this because I didn't know he had a son. Heck, he's never mentioned anything about having children. As a matter of fact, we never touched on his home life.

I'm trying to work everything out in my head but I keep falling blank.

Surely the universe must be playing some dirty trick on me. How does this happen? How do I fall in love with both father and son and know nothing about it?

Muzi downs his drink and heaves a sigh.

"You went after him," he says in a whisper, "you left me here and went after him!"

"BECAUSE YOU'RE FUCKEN MARRIED, MUZI! I HAVE NO FUTURE WITH YOU, YOU ALWAYS REMIND ME OF THIS," I roar, "I might love you with everything in me but I can't give up all of my dreams for you. I want to get married. I want to have children. I want to build a life with my partner. I don't want to die alone, Muzi," I whisper.

My tears cascade down my face and I make no attempt of wiping them. This moment was always going to come even without the involvement of Mathonga.

Muzi knows that he is not as available to me as I am to him and he acknowledges it. He apologises for it constantly. A part of him is selfish yet another part selflessly knows that he can't keep me around forever.

I found out he was married after I had already fallen in love with him. You see, Daddy doesn't wear a ring. When I first found out, I thought he kept it hidden just until he could get me but then after I had found out and realised that he still doesn't have it on, I asked and he said he just doesn't wear one.

His staff knows he's married and they also know he's cheating on his wife with me but I guess they're loyal to their boss hence it hasn't gotten to her.

Oh, he owns this hotel and the club upstairs, along with many other hotels.

I tried to break things off when I found out but he wouldn't let me. He refused to let me go and the more time I spent with him, the more I fell for him and the harder it got to just pack up and leave. So I stayed.

I know it was wrong but I loved him and it wasn't even about the money. It was about him. The type of man he is, how he made me feel, how he treated me. I mattered to him. He loved me loudly in his own way and that was what I needed at that time.

So I stayed.

"I know," he says, "I knew that I would have to let you go at some point but I didn't see it coming this soon. Is that what you wanted us to talk about?"

I nod, "I was going to tell you about him. I'm sorry."

"My son? How did you not know he was my son."

"Because you never mentioned having a son, Muzi. All I knew was that you were married and that was it. You can't pretend like you let me into every aspect of your life. I would walk past your wife in the streets and I can respect you for not rubbing her in my face. But you can't sit here and make it seem like I actually went out there to find your son to fall in love with him so that I can rub it in your face."

"He fucking looks like me!" he roars.

"Yeah and up until a few fucking weeks ago I looked like my stepmother."

He's breathing heavily; we both are. He's trying to paint me as the bad guy but I'm not.

I'm just the girl he was seeing that happened to fall in love with his son. That's it.

"You know that you two can never work out right? How's it going to work? Sunday lunch with your ex and his son?"

"How does Sunday lunch with the love of my life and his fucken father sound?"

"You're delusional!"

"You said you'd let me go, Muzi. You said one day you'd look me in the eye and allow me to walk away. This is that one day."

"My son wasn't part of that one day. Do you... He's... Fuck! I need to get out of here and you should too," he says coldly.

I want to say I don't understand why he is still cold, at the same time I want to say I understand why he's being so cold towards me but I'm just so confused right now and so overwhelmed that I just don't know how to feel... like just don't know what to think.

It's all a mess!

but he's right I need to get out of here before his son comes back with his mother. I grab everything that belongs to me.

"I'm sorry it had to end like this," I say.
He nods. That's all he does. My heart breaks a bit. I guess I'm never going to hear from him again.

The elevator ride down feels like a depiction of my life at the moment - going down fast. Am I going to recover from this?

CHAPTER TWENTY NINE

I've been sitting in my apartment for the past hour; my thoughts are all over the place but the loudest is Mathonga.

He got into his car and drove off even after I told him that I loved him. I understand that you were shocked. I just need him to give me a chance, just one moment to talk to him.

And I'm not going to get that chance was sitting in here and wallowing in self-pity, so I'm going to go to his place and I'm going to demand that he sees me.

Yep!

I grab my keys and head out. The drive to Maboneng isn't that long. I'm here.

"Hi," I greet the security guard.

He's seen me coming in with Mathonga a couple of times, so I hope that he will let me in.

"Hey, how are you?"

"I'm good and you?"

"Good."

"I'm here to surprise Mathonga. I've been away for a couple of days, so I was hoping I could slip in and surprise him."

I don't even think I'm charming enough for him to blush and let me through. I'm just a dry piece of chicken with no flavour.

"I wish I had a woman who would do such things for me. He actually just came through a short while ago. Go in," he says with a broad smile.

I force a smile onto my face as I thank him.

I'm nervous, my heart is in my throat. I just hope that he will at least give me the time of day.

My knees are jelly as I knock on the door. I

can hear he's in there because I hear some shuffling. The key turns; this is it. He opens the door. Our eyes meet and it feels like time stands still then starts to move in slow motions. The myriad of emotions that travel across his face sink my heart to the pit of my stomach.

"What do you want?" he spits out.

I won't lie, that hurts big time but I get it.

"I just need a moment. Please."

I don't wait for him to invite me in, I force my way through. Knowing him, he was going to shut the door in my face.

I sit on the couch. I'm shitting in my pants right now. The thought of losing this man terrifies the crap out of me. My soul has never felt on fire as much as it has over the past few months with Mathonga. He has somewhat brought me to life and added a dash of sparkles in the process.

He stands, leaning against the wall and just looks at me. It's as if he's studying me and trying to find ways to say what is weighing heavily on his heart and mind.

I've never been in his presence and felt this awkward before. All I want to do is snuggle in his arms and just take in his presence. I want him to kiss me softly and whisper sweet nothings in my ear.

"What do you want, Nkosazana?"

"I came here to apologise."

"For what?"

"I swear I didn't know he was your father."

"Aside from that fact, why would you be with someone who has a wife, someone old enough to be your father?"

I chuckle, "You know your father, right? He doesn't exactly look like a father to a thirty-three-year-old."

He laughs softly. My heart smiles. His laugh warms my heart and makes the harshness of reality seem like a drop in the ocean.

"He was smooth. He took his time with me and by the time I found out that he was married, it was too late for me to walk away. I had fallen in love and for the first time in a long time, I felt what it was like to be loved and respected.

The ex broke my heart. He ripped it right out of my chest and when I met Muzi, I was reminded of how beautiful love is and that I deserved it.

He made me happy, Mathonga."

He grunts, "he's my dad. How do I look at my mom and bring someone into her home, someone who has slept with her husband and introduce them as my future wife?"

I get up and make my way towards him.

"We can make it work."

"I don't think you understand just how important my mother is to me. The last time he put her through this, it almost tore our family apart.

You honestly can't expect me to bring you home and introduce you to my mother as my girlfriend knowing very well that you were screwing her husband behind her back," he says through gritted teeth.

I flinch.

"Why is it on me? Why is it my fault? Why can't you blame your father because he is the one that cheated on your mother, not me!"

"So don't feel bad about this?"

"Fuck you, Mathonga!"

"No, fuck you, Nkosazana!"

He punches the wall and groans in pain. Stupid! Serves him right doesn't being judgy! He's crying out in pain. I hate hearing him in pain. I grab some ice and wrap it around a dish towel.

"Let me see."

He unwillingly reaches his hand over to me; I press the ice onto his knuckles. He groans.

"You're stupid," I tell him.

He stares down at me, "I wish I could forget about what I saw but I can't. You've been sleeping with my father and I can't unsee that. I can't forgive and forget that."

"Forgive? What are you forgiving?"

"What?"

"What are you forgiving? It's not like I cheated on you with him. Sure, the situation is shitty but I never lied to you, Mathonga. From the moment we started seeing each other you knew that I had someone. You can't act like I betrayed you with your father."

He nods. "Sure but I can't look my mother in the eye and smile about a potential daughter-in-law that's slept with her husband."

"Mathonga, we can -"

"No, we can't! I think you should leave."

"Babe..."

"Leave, Nkosazana. What we had is over. We're done. So please, leave."

CHAPTER THIRTY

Tonight is supposed to be the happiest night of my life but instead, my eyes are puffy and my voice scratchy. Thankfully, I'm not making a speech. All I have to do is nod, smile and thank people for their presence.

Everything in me wants to cancel the evening but I have worked too damn hard to not be there tonight. I just need to hold my head up high and take the night as it comes.

Heavy makeup is the order of the evening. My eyes need all the assistance they can get. Unfortunately, there is nothing I can do about my voice.

My throat cries out at me in anger every day but I don't listen - I keep crying. How can I

not though? Mathonga refuses to talk to me. He reads my messages and ignores them and flat-out rejects my calls. But I won't stop trying though. I will make him see just how much he means to me. In fact, he deserves another text.

"You came into my life and flipped it upside down. When you started making moves on me, I told you that I had someone but you pushed and pushed until I fell in love with you and decided to end things with him. Forget that he's your father, the fact is you messed up my life and now you want to just walk away? How selfish are you Mathonga!?"
- send!

Okay, maybe I shouldn't have called him selfish.

"Okay, maybe you're not selfish. But Mathonga, please, you can't leave me. You can't throw away what we have. Please give us a chance. We can work through things. We can make this work. Please..." - send.

I'm not holding my breath but I hope he responds because I miss him. I miss talking

to him. I miss laughing with him. I miss making love to him.

"Open the door" - the text reads.

No way!

I have excitedly hurry to the door. Our screams fill the hallway. Probably the entire building. We hold onto each other for dear life.

"What are you doing here!?"

"Dummy, it's one of the most important nights of your life. You didn't think I was going to miss it, did you?"

"This is a lovely surprise!"

She pulls me to the couch and studies my face. She might never voice it out a lot but she always knows when something is wrong with me.

"Spill."

I haven't let her in on what I've been doing over the past few months, except for the eatery, of course. She knows Muzi, they've met a couple of times and that's all she knows about him - that he's my man. She wasn't aware of his marital status. I don't

know maybe a part of me always felt bad about walking around and telling people that I was dating a married man. I don't know.

This is my chance and my opportunity to open up a little bit and out and I use it. I tell her everything. I tell her about Muzi, about Mathonga. I tell her about how much I love the son more than I do the dad and how much I want him back and how much I wish that he could just give me a chance to fix this somehow. I tell her how much it hurts that I'm alone now.

I also tell her about the dead biological mother and how much I hate her. I tell her about how disappointed I am in my father. He used to be my best friend and in a matter of weeks, it's as if that relationship has ceased to exist. He hasn't called me since the funeral and I don't think it's my job to run after him. He's the parent and he's the one that wronged me, so forgive me for not making the first move.

"You've gone through so much in such a short space of time. Do you want to see

someone?"

One thing I love about Brenda is that she likes thinking of solutions. Any other human would've made a fuss about how I kept all of this to myself and didn't let them in on all this. But not my Brenda. She's an amazing human being.

"No, I'll be fine. I just need some time to get over everything."

I don't know if that's going to happen but hey...

"You don't always have to do that, you know?"

"Do what?"

"Act all strong. You're human, you're allowed to break. You're allowed to mourn for what you thought would be forever but ended up in a completely messy situation. You're allowed to cry for the mother that you never knew. You just are allowed to heal from things that the general public would believe that you don't need healing from."

"I don't-"

"Need healing, sure. But I was just telling you

that it's okay to want to heal. Most of the time we go through things and we go through them all by ourselves because we believe that that might be a tad hard for the next person to understand why we are mourning certain things. The thing is they don't need to understand. No one needs to understand your pain; no one needs to understand why you have to cry and heal from certain things. As long you understand, that's all that matters."

"Brenda, please don't..."

"Okay... okay. Come, let's get you all dolled up for your big evening. I'm so proud of you."

"Thank you."

She pulls me in for a squeeze. All the love and encouragement that I need right now, I can feel. I'm so grateful to have her here.

The opening is going well. Everyone is having an incredible time. The media is here. The food is to die for. Everything is good, except

for the fact that I don't have the one thing, the one person that I wish I could be here with me celebrating this moment.

Mathonga.

Thanks to all this makeup I don't look half as miserable as I feel inside. would it be rude of me to just call it a night and leave the staff here to close up? I genuinely don't feel like being in this place right now.

"Don't even think about it. Be happy tonight, we can cry tomorrow and stuff our faces with ice cream and everything else that lasts a lifetime on the hips," Thabisile says.

I grunt. I hate how well she knows me sometimes.

"Tonight is the biggest night of your night. You deserve this moment, don't allow anything to distract you. Now, come grab a drink and mingle."

"I hate you."

"I know. I love you. Now come!"

Argh. I guess she's right, I have the rest of my life to wallow in self-pity. Tonight, we celebrate my success and everything that it's

going to bring for me.

Mathonga aside, let's get through this evening and then we can fall back into our little bubble once the last guest has left.

CHAPTER THIRTY

ONE

"Come on, babe, you can't stay in here for the rest of your life," Thabisile says.

I actually can.

Each day is tougher than the last. It's been a couple of weeks since the revelation and my heart shatters every day.

Mathonga still hates me.

I haven't spoken to Muzi since the day I left the penthouse.

I'm a mess.

I wish I could turn off my emotions and live without feeling anything. Feeling sucks!

I still text Mathonga and I still don't get a response.

"You need to pick yourself up. I know it sucks, I know you miss him but you can't let yourself go like this. You need to pick up the

pieces and move on."

Pick up the pieces? These little shards can't be placed back together. My broken pieces can't be pieced back together to create a whole new version of me.

"I don't want to move on. I want Mathonga. You know I never whine and pine over a man, so that should tell you just how much I love him. I wish I could forget about him and just do my thing but I can't. Every time I close my eyes, I see him. Literally. I have flashbacks of our time together. I've never felt as strongly about a man as I do about him.

Brenda, I want to spend the rest of my life with him. That's a big thing. Fuck, it's huge! I just want a chance to try and explain. I don't know how I'm going to do that I don't know how I'm going to make him forget or move past this. But I just need a chance with him. I just a moment Brenda, that's all I need."

"Hey," she pulls me into her arms, "I know how much you love him and it hurts me to see you hurt like this and I wish I could take the pain away from you. I'm sorry that you're

going through this but we're going to get through it. You going to be fine, you will see."

"I don't know..."

"We cry until we can't no more and then we get up and march on."

I don't know if I have the strength to do that. I need him. I miss him and I need him to come back into my life. I need him to realise just how much he means to me. I love him so much and I don't have the strength to carry on without him in it.

I need him.

There's someone at the door.

"I'll get it," I say.

I'm shocked to see him here.

"What are you doing here?"

"I came to apologize."

"Hmmm."

I open the door wide open for him and he walks in.

"Thabisile, how are you?"

"Good thanks and you, Baba?"

I chuckle.

"Good."

"Right, I'll be in the bedroom if you need me."

She disappears into the bedroom leaving me with the stranger that I call my father. I offer him something to drink but he declines, so we settled on the couch and I wait in anticipation for him to apologize and say what he came here to say.

"I have no excuse as to why I haven't been reaching out to you. I should've been there for you after dropping that bomb on you and probably disrupting your life. I guess I was ashamed of keeping such an important part of your life from you."

"Why was I kept in the dark?"

"We all felt it was best. I'm sorry."

"Honestly, right now your apology means nothing because of how I feel. Baba, you became a stranger when I needed you the most. I don't know what I did to you but you hurt me. You treated me like I wasn't your daughter.

I went to that funeral because of you and you didn't even acknowledge me. I don't think

you know how that made me feel. You were always been my go-to person and for you to suddenly disappear on me really hurt me.

Honestly don't know if I can move past this and not the lying about who my mother is part but the you switching up on me part."

Honestly, it's not even about the lies and the secrets because holding a grudge about that doesn't help the situation, it doesn't change anything. She's dead and that's that but him and his shadiness?

I can't get over that. I can't get over how he forgot about me. He threw a bomb on me and expected me to deal with the debris all by myself. He didn't care that his daughter was hurting from everything that she had just found out. He continued with his life like nothing had happened and for that, I don't think I can ever open my heart up to him again.

CHAPTER THIRTY TWO

The eatery is doing well, which makes me really happy. All I've ever wanted was to be successful. All the success really makes me happy but my heart is still empty. I still stalk him and I still text him but I still don't get any response. He was last seen on WhatsApp weeks ago.

I miss him so much. I miss him with everything in me and all I need is a moment, just one. I've tried to go see him at his place but he told the guards not to let me in anymore.

My entire life feels like it's worthless. I know men aren't all that but he is. He is everything that I've ever prayed for and more. I need him.

My phone pings. Muzi? Oh wow. He wants to see me. He says he's at the eatery. I wish I could say that I'm not gonna talk to him but I am curious as to what he has to say to me. I slide my feet into my flops and grab my keys. The drive to the eatery is not that long, thank goodness.

I spot him sitting in the corner as I walk in. I pull a chair and sit across from him.

"You look horrible," he says.

I shrug, "Thanks."

He also looks horrible himself. His eyes are sunken in and his skin looks barely alive. He looks dehydrated, like a character from the walking dead.

"How have you been?" he asks.

I want to laugh. Like he cares. Okay, he might still. He still sends me money, which makes me laugh because he's supposed to hate me.

"I'm okay, Muzi. Still alive, unfortunately."

He frowns, "You can't talk like that."

Again, I shrug.

"Why did you call me here?" I ask him.

I don't think he left his wife and his comfy home to just make small conversation.

He sighs. I see tears in his eyes. Yep. They drop but he quickly wipes them. I sit up.

Daddy never cries, especially not in public.

"What's wrong?" I ask, worried.

I see empathy, or is it sympathy, in his eyes. He looks like he is struggling to contain his emotions.

"Erm," He clears his throat, "Mathonga..."

He pauses and shakes his head.

I'm looking at him expectantly. He better say something!

"He was involved in an accident three weeks ago," he whispers. "He's in a coma."

What?

"Sorry, what?" I chuckle.

"There might be some damage to his brain," he says.

I laugh. He's shitting with me, right?

"You know, all you have to do is write me a

check and I'll stay away from your son. That's how they do it in the movies. Not this fucked up stunt you're pulling!"

"Nkosa-"

"No," I cut him off, "it's fucked up! Did Mathonga put you up to this?"

He allows his tears to fall freely.

I shake my head. No! No! No!

"You're lying to me,"

"He might not remember any of us when he wakes up... if he wakes up."

"You sent him away, right? Tell me you sent him to one of your hotels or something and that he'll be back once you think he's over me."

He has to tell me that! I can't handle knowing that he might never remember me. I can't...

He slides a diary to me, "I found this in his stuff. He wrote about you a lot."

MATHONGA - that's what's written on the cover.

The diary is leather. It smells like him.

Daddy puts a paper bag on the table.

"I also thought you'd appreciate this."

"Why didn't you tell me earlier?" I ask.
Why couldn't he allow me to say bye to him?
"I couldn't. It was selfish and I'm sorry."
He couldn't? He knew how much I loved him
and he denied me the chance to say good bye
to him.

I nod, "Thanks for this."

I grab the bag and diary as I get up.

"I'm really sorry, Nkosazana. And for what
it's worth, he loves you."

I nod. I can't do anything except for that.

CHAPTER THIRTY THREE

"Dear diary,

That's how they start their diary entries, right? I met a girl tonight. Man, she's beautiful. That's all I can say about her. She's beautiful. She's breathtaking.

Her attitude is on steroids, it kind of turns me on. It's so weird that I'm attracted to her. I usually don't go for women with spunk but her? She reels me in. I loved how she was so stubborn and refused to do what the hosts said. I admired her courage.

And then we got talking and I felt myself leaving earth and heading to a planet far away. There is no denying our attraction to each other. We have chemistry. I don't want to come off too strong but I don't think I can help myself.

She gave me her number and I plan on using them."

-

-

-

"Dear Diary

She was here, in my apartment, eating my food and laughing with me. Gosh, it felt like I had won the lottery. Heck, it felt better than that. Just being in her presence was everything I could've ever asked for.

I don't know but I have a feeling that we're going to be in each other's lives for a very long time. Well, that's what I hope for.

I can't wait to see her again."

-

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"Dear Diary

*I tasted her lips and I know that I'm fucked!
Yep! She has me and I am never escaping
from under her spell. She could tell me to
jump and I wouldn't even await further
instruction.*

I'm doomed but I like it."

-

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"Dear Diary

I think I love her."

-

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-

"Dear Diary

Sorry, I know it's been a while since I jotted down my thoughts but I've kind of been preoccupied. As I write this I'm sitting in the car, in the parking lot while she's probably walking around the apartment in my shirt. I invited her to Cape Town and she's here. I couldn't believe it when I saw her. I don't even have the words to express just how I feel. I hope this time spent with her will cement my place in her life. I'm about to walk up there and give myself to her. Wish me luck."

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"I told her I loved her. I couldn't hold it in anymore. I hope she chooses me."

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"Dear Diary

Forgive my manners in the previous entry. I couldn't help myself."

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"Dear Diary

I don't know how to do this but I feel like I need to talk to someone before I burst.

It's only been a day but I'm already losing my mind. I discovered something yesterday, something that will haunt me for the rest of my life. I discovered that my father and a woman who I am madly in love with are in a relationship, meaning that my father is cheating on my mother with someone old enough to be his daughter.

Yes, it's messed up. In fact, it's fucked up, excuse the language. It's eating me inside and I don't know how to deal with this.

When I kicked Nkosazana out, I felt a part of me break. A piece of my soul left me and I will never get it back. I don't think there will ever

be a woman that will make me feel the way she did. In fact, I think I'll be off women for the rest of my life. It's a good thing I'm not a vampire so I won't have to live with this pain forever.

Man, I love this girl. I love everything about her and I hate that I can't be with her. My love and loyalty to my mother outweigh what I feel for her.

Hopefully, I'll get through this hurt soon."

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"Dear Diary

Dad came to see me today. He looked like he'd been run over by a truck. I don't know if it's because he lost Nkosazana or because of the guilt of us sleeping with the same woman. I don't think I'll ever be able to get past this. And it's not even because we slept with the same woman but rather because he is cheating on my mother.

Anyway, he begged for my forgiveness and I told him I needed time. I don't think time will ever make me forget any of this, but it's worth the shot, right?

He also begged me not to tell my mother this which I was expecting. I had already decided that I was not going to mention any of this that's my mother why should I be the one to break her heart? If anyone is going to tell her about anything and if anyone is going to break her heart, it is going to be her husband and not me."

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"Dear Diary

Today is a big day for Nkosazana. it's the grand opening of her eatery and it kills me that I'm not there for her. I can still hear her excitement and I can still see her animated look as she passionately tells me about the place. She has been looking forward to this

for such a long time and I'm happy for her. Obviously now I know that my father had a hand in helping her set this up but it's not even about that I'm just genuinely happy that she gets to live out her dream.

You know I was supposed to help her out yesterday. The plan was that I would go to the spot with her yesterday and make sure that everything was ready for today.

I don't know how many times I've fought myself from calling her or even getting into the car and driving to her place. I feel it would be unfair on both of us because the truth is, we can't be together.

I love her with everything in me but my moral compass is too high for me to just forget about what I know.

If Mom wasn't in the picture I could probably get over the fact that my dad and I had the same woman. But my mother, I love her too much to bring someone that had a bit of her husband in her presence. It just wouldn't work.

Anyway, I hope the opening goes well. She

deserves it."

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"Dear Diary

I went to her eatery today. A part of me was hoping I would get just a glimpse of her but she wasn't around. Her staff said she'd taken a couple of days off. I wanted to pick up the phone and ask her what was wrong I wanted to find out if she was okay but I fought against the urge and here I am, writing about it.

I wish I could say it gets easier with each passing day but it seems to be getting harder and harder. With each passing day, I miss her. I miss her tenderness. I miss her cheekiness. I even miss her poking me in the middle of the night just to annoy me.

I love like this only comes once in a lifetime and to have tasted it for such a short space of time only to lose it so abruptly kills me."

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"Dear Diary

Do you think we could make it work? Do you think my love for her outweighs everything? I want to try with her. I want to make things work."

-
-
-

That was his last day entry. I close the diary and hug it close to my chest, allowing my tears to flow. I'm in one of his hoodies that Muzi gave to me. They make me feel closer to him.

I've been crying since I opened the diary and the headache is screaming at me to just close everything and shut my eyes. I wish I could shut my heart and join him whenever he is resting for the moment.

It hurts and it sucks.
I shut my eyes and allow the pain to consume
me.

CHAPTER THIRTY FOUR

It has been two weeks since Muzi told me about Mathonga. That means he's been in a coma for five weeks. I want him to wake up. I pray for him to wake up but nothing has happened yet.

I haven't gone to see him yet because I don't know if Muzi will allow me to see him. He did take three weeks before telling him that he's been involved in an accident. But then again, maybe him telling me and giving me his diary was his way of telling me that he accepts that his son loves me and that I love

him as well.

I grab my phone and send him a text, asking if it would be possible for me to see Mathonga. I hope he says yes.

My apartment is so quiet; it's a reminder of how lonely I am. With no visits from Daddy or Mathonga, I'm all alone.

Brenda left a couple of days ago. She and Mduzuzi had planned a trip but they postponed it for a few more weeks. They couldn't push it any further without losing money, so I told her to go. All we did was cry anyway. I appreciate that she was here when I needed her most though.

Right now, all I want is to see Mathonga.

My phone pings; it's Muzi.

He sent the name of the hospital as well as the visiting hours.

I'm grateful that he's allowing me to see him. I thank him before rushing to take a quick shower. Within ten minutes, I'm done and I'm heading out the door.

"Nkosazana, I haven't been seeing a lot of you lately," Themba says.

“Hey, Themba. I haven’t been feeling well, so I’ve been locked up in my little house but I’m feeling better now.”

“I’m sorry. Can I get you anything to make you feel better?”

“You’re too sweet but no thank you. I have to run, I’ll see you tomorrow?”

“Sharp.”

The drive to the hospital is filled with my stomach churning. I don’t know what I’m expecting to find but I just hope that his parent’s aren’t there when I arrive.

My phone pings again, it’s Muzi.

“Ask for Doctor Reatile, she’s in charge of his case. I’ve asked her to add you onto the list of people that can see him.” – the text reads.

I thank him and throw the phone inside my bag. When I arrive at the hospital I do ask instructed. She asks one of the nurses to show me to his room. My knees are wobbly and my stomach is a mess. I want to throw up; I want to cry; I don’t know what’s happening.

The second we step into his room, tears fill my eyes. The nurse leaves me with a comatose Mathonga and I can't help but allow the tears to flow.

His hand is cold and there seems like there isn't any life in him. Seeing him in this condition is breaking me and I don't know what to do or even say.

I kiss his hand, hoping he will feel me and miraculously wake up. But who am I kidding, he would probably fall deeper into the coma if he knew that I was here, holding his hand.

The thought of him being repulsed by my presence breaks my heart.

I love him and all I want is a chance to fix things.

He has to wake up.

Mathonga has to come back because we deserve a chance.

He has to give me that!

CHAPTER THIRTY FIVE

I have a headache from all the crying I've been doing. I came back from the doctor about two hours ago and since I stepped inside this apartment all I've been doing is crying.

I haven't been feeling well. I've been lightheaded and having hot flashes, so I went to the doctor. We ran a couple of tests and it turns out I'm pregnant.

I immediately knew who the father was. The

realisation of a pregnancy came with the realisation of how Mathonga and I were always careless and never used a condom. I don't know what it was about him that drove me so crazy to the point of forgetting one of the most important things but I forgot about it.

I was so scared that I asked the doctor to test for STD's and STI's as well; the reality of my carelessness was a tad bit hard for me to swallow. Thankfully, everything came back negative. I rejoiced and let out shouts of hallelujah!

How do I know that the child is Mathonga's? Well, Muzi mentioned having a vasectomy. Thinking back to my conversation with Mathonga about how his parents were only going to be blessed with one child makes me wonder; did Muzi get the vasectomy because he just wanted to cheat raw without any consequences or what?

Well, whatever the reason is, it doesn't matter. I'm just grateful that this isn't his child that I'm carrying.

It's been another three week, meaning it's been two months since he's been in a coma. I've seen him a couple of times but each time left me broken, so I haven't been to see him in two weeks. I guess I have a reason to see him now.

I go wash my face and head out. If Mathonga won't wake up for us then surely hearing that he has a child on the way should wake him up, right?

I hope so.

When I get to the hospital I head straight to his room. I stop dead in my tracks when I see Muzi and his wife. This is my first time seeing her. Well, I've seen her pictures at every property Mathonga and I have been in. It's just weird seeing her as Muzi's wife and not as Mathonga's girlfriend.

Just as I'm about to turn back and walk away, she spots me. She smiles faintly and I return the awkward hug.

"Sanibonani," I greet awkwardly.

It's so weird being in a space with Muzi and not being comfortable.

He clears his throat, “Nkosazana. Come in.”
I awkwardly walk in and stand at the foot of the bed.

“She’s the girl on the portrait,” his wife says.
I look at them in confusion.

“It’s her.”

Can someone tell me what is happening?

“Mathonga has a portrait of you in his house,” she says. “Where are my manners, I’m Nompumelo, Mathonga’s mother.”

“Hi, Ma. I’m Nkosazana.”

She giggles sweetly. “I know who you are, dear. You clearly mean a lot to my son.”

My heart breaks. I mean nothing to Mathonga. He wants nothing to do with me. If he could, he would probably erase me from the face of the earth for hurting his mother.

“Have there been any improvements?” I ask.
I don’t want to remain fixated on the idea of Mathonga loving me so much that he kept a reminder of me in his space. Maybe he was in the process of throwing everything out before he got in the accident. I don’t even know of a damn portrait.

“The doctor hasn’t given us an update today but he’s been the same this entire week.”

I nod absentmindedly. What if he doesn’t come out of his coma? Am I going to have to raise this child by myself?

“Are you okay, my baby?” his mom asks.

No, I’m not. My life is a mess! Everything is fucked up and I only have myself to blame. But I don’t say that; I just nod.

“Love, let’s give them some space.”

Muzi clears his throat. “We’ll be outside if you need anything.”

They step out and I move to the chair next to him, taking a seat. His hands don’t feel as cold as they did the first time I went to see him. That’s a good sign, right?

“I read that people in a coma can hear everything, so I hope you hear this. I’m so sorry, Mathonga. I’m sorry for everything. I’m sorry for how you found out. I’m sorry that this is the way things are. But one thing I am not sorry about is loving you.

I love you; I fell in love with you and I saw what life could be with you in it and that’s

the only life I want.

Mathonga, you have to fight. You have to fight and wake up because we're going to have a baby.

I'm pregnant. We're going to have a baby and he or she can't go through this life without you, so you have to fight and wake up." I burst into tears. "If not for me or us then for our child."

"You're pregnant?" I hear Muzi's voice behind me.

I quickly wipe my tears and stand up. His wife is next to him with a smile on her face.

I nod.

"Oh, you poor thing." She walks over to me and pulls me in for a hug.

My heart shatters; I cry harder. I'm not crying because I'm pregnant and the father of my child is lying in a hospital bed; I'm crying because his mother is the wife of a man I was in a relationship with.

It's a messed up situation and I don't know we're going to work around everything. All I know is that I want Mathonga and this baby.

CHAPTER THIRTY SIX

Someone is pounding on my door. I drag my body across the apartment to open the door. I'm shocked to see Muzi standing on the other side of the door. He doesn't even wait for me to invite him in, he pushes me aside and walks in.

“Come right in, Muzi,” I say sarcastically. I close the door, draw in a deep breath and turn around. He is passing up and down in the living space. I don't understand what he is doing here.

“Ufunani, Muzi?”

“You’re pregnant?”

I roll my eyes. He is so full of drama. It’s insane.

“Yes. With your grandchild. Congratulations, grandpa.”

“Nkosazana!”

“Yini, Muzi? We’re not together. We’re done, so what exactly is your problem?”

“You’re pregnant. I thought you didn’t want children.”

“I didn’t want children because you didn’t want them, Muzi. We wouldn’t have been able to have children anyway. I really don’t understand why you are blowing a fuse, I was just your side chick, someone you could never have a future with. So what is your issue?”

“My issue is that-”

“You’re selfish,” I cut him off. “That is what your issue is. You’re a selfish man that wants his bread buttered on both sides. We’re over, finished! You don’t get to throw your weight around in my life anymore. So, if you don’t have anything to say, please leave.”

“I have plenty to say.”

“As the grandfather of my child, I’m asking you not to try you shit with me. You know me, Muzi, so don’t. Go home to your wife and comfort her about your son.

She needs you more than this conversation needs to happen. So go.”

“Nkosa-”

“Muzi, I’m exhausted. I’m pregnant and I’m worried about your son. Please just let me be.”

He sighs, brushing his face. “I’m sorry. I’m still not over the fact that you and Mathonga were together.”

“Okay but please go. Go home. And don’t ever come here.”

“So we’re going to act like we don’t know each other?”

“No, we know each other. You are my child’s grandfather. That’s it.”

“Okay.” He nods.

Great, now can he please leave? I’d like to get some rest.

“Are you coming to the hospital tomorrow?”

“I’ll come on Thursday,” I say.

“Do you need anything?”

“No, I’m okay.”

“Money?”

I chuckle. “I’m good, Muzi. Really.”

“I still care you know...”

“Muzi, don’t because you know this is going to end with me screaming out your name and that can’t happen anymore.”

He clears his throat.

“I should get going.”

“Yeah, drive safe.”

“Sharp.”

CHAPTER THIRTY SEVEN

To say that I'm shocked would be an understatement. Mathonga is awake. His eyes are opened and he's starring at me. I was expecting to find him asleep with his parents by his side and now I don't know what to do.

This is week eleven of him being in a coma. The doctors kept telling us to be hopeful and I guess this is what they meant. Have his parent's been notified? Do they know that he is awake? I don't know. It's tense and awkward in here.

I wish I could turn back but I can't.

"Hi," I greet nervously.

"Hi." His tone is flat and not encouraging.

I expected that.

"Have you been awake for long?" I ask.

Stupid question!

"What are you doing here?" he asks.

Okay. He remembers. He still hates me and wants nothing to do with me.

"I'm happy you're awake. I was so worried," I tell him. "We'll talk once you're fully healed. Take care."

I turn to walk out.

"Nkosazana."

I turn around. "Yeah?"

"Thank you."

"For?"

"Coming to check up on me."

"That's what you do when you care about someone so you don't have to thank me. Anyway, I'll see you when you're feeling a bit better."

He stares at me like he wants to say something but he doesn't; instead, he nods,

much to my disappointment but I'll be patient. Our lives are linked forever so...

I make my way out and dial Muzi's number.

"Nkosazana."

"Did you know that Mathonga was awake?"

"What?" I hear some shuffling.

"I'm at the hospital and he's awake."

"Stay there, we're on our way." He hangs up.

I don't think so. I'm not going to sit here and wait for him and his wife. I don't know where his mind frame is so I'm not going to test things. What if he decides to snap and spill the beans to his mother? I'm not sticking around.

The first thing I do when I get home I strip and slide into Mathonga's jacket. It still smells like him. I know this makes me look obsessed with him but I'm not; I just really love him.

My phone is ringing, it's Muzi.

"Yes?"

"Where are you?"

"I'm at home."

"I thought I told you to stay."

“I don’t answer to you, Muzi. Ufunani?” I snap.

He groans. He’s frustrated, I get it but he can’t force me to do anything.

“You’re frustrating.”

“Let me know when he gets discharged,” I say.

“Did you tell him?”

“Muzi, just let me know when he’s out, or should I ask your wife?”

“Bye Nkosazana.” He hangs up.

He has no right to be angry at me. No right whatsoever. But let him sulk all he wants.

Muzi is being childish right now. I don’t have time to nurse his feelings. He will like his own wounds.

My mind is on Mathonga; I’m obviously happy that he is awake but another part of me is anxious about everything that is about to unfold. I definitely know that he is not going to take this lightly. He’s probably going to ask me how sure I am that the pregnancy is his, which is understandable. I just hope that he doesn’t drag things out.

It's been two days since Mathonga woke up and no one has given me a call about his condition. I know he has a broken leg and a few cuts and bruises but that's just about it. However, I'm certain the coma helped heal the head injuries – if he had any.

I need to talk to him about this pregnancy before it moves further along. I text Muzi, asking him how Mathonga is; he calls back immediately.

“Muzi.”

“Nkosazana, how are you?”

I didn't text him for this and he knows this. If I could, I wouldn't have to go through him to ask about his son.

“I'm good thank you. Has he been discharged?”

“Yes, he has but he'll be heading to KZN for a few weeks.”

Was he going to tell me this if I hadn't asked?

“When does he leave?”

“In a few days.”

“Where is he staying? I really need to talk to him.”

“He’s back at his place. He didn’t want to stay with us.”

“At Maboneng?”

“No, he has a house. I’ll send you the address,” he says.

“Thank you. Bye.”

“Nkosa-”

I don’t wait for him to finish as I hang up.

CHAPTER THIRTY EIGHT

I drove to the address Muzi sent over; it's in the northern suburbs. It suits him. I ring the intercom and wait for a response. I wanted to take an Uber but the thought of standing out in the sun while he refuses to open for me paralysed me, so I drove.

Muzi would be happy about that.

“What do you want?”

“Just a few minutes of your time, please, it's important. Just allow me to say what I came here to say and then I'll be out of your hair. I promise.”

I hear him sigh before the gate open. I thank my lucky stars as I drive in. The yard is beautiful, I can only imagine what the inside looks like.

The main door is open, so I let myself in. I can see him sitting on the couch from here. He has a cast on his leg. At least he's alive, that's all that matters.

"Hi," I greet awkwardly.

"Hey."

The look he is giving me makes me squirm until I sit my ass down.

"What can I do for you?" he's so cold.

I clear my throat.

"Mathonga, I'm very sorry. I know that won't change anything but I truly am. I love you and I want a chance with you but I don't want to push you," I pause and draw in a breath, "I'm pregnant. I found out recently."

He sits up.

"What does that have to do with me?"

"You're the father."

He bursts into laughter. "You were with my father for years."

“Exactly and I never fell pregnant.”

“Uthini?”

“You father couldn’t have fathered this child because he can’t have any more children. This child is yours.”

“Bullshit!”

“You act like I came onto you or I lied to you about my relationship status. You knew I was in a relationship, yet you pursued me and you fucked me. You told me you wanted to try with me, even though I told you, countless times, that I couldn’t.

You’re a hypocrite. But it’s fine. If you don’t want to be part of this child’s life then that’s okay but don’t act like I never told you. When you’re done sulking and licking your wounds, you know where to find me.”

I get up. “Please open the gate for me.”

I don’t even wait for him to say anything as I grab my keys and make my way out.

The gate opens and I drive out. I told him and that’s all I needed to do. The rest is up to him. If he wants to be the father, then he is more than welcome to but if he wants nothing to

do with the baby, then that's also okay. It's fine!

CHAPTER THIRTY NINE

“Let’s see.”

She applies the cold gel on my stomach. The moment the heartbeat sounds, filling the room, my heart swells. This little heartbeat lives in me. I get to take care of this angel for as long as I’m alive. I know I’ve heard this heartbeat before but it gets me every time.

I never thought I would fall pregnant and actually feel this connected to the soul.

“We’re doing quite well, hey? Five months and growing well. You still don’t want to know the gender?”

“No. I really want it to be a surprise.”

I’m only going to start buying neutral coloured things. I’ve been thinking about what I’m going to do with the baby coming and all. I don’t want to raise the child in an apartment. I have enough money saved from all the times Muzi used to send me money, which he still does, by the way.

I think he hasn’t cancelled the payments to my account. I’m not going to ask him about it because right now the money is going to come in handy. I’ve been shopping around for some houses and I’m willing to use everything I have saved up on purchasing the house. I don’t want to have debt hanging over my head in a few years’ time. I’ve seen a few that I like and I think they will work. I don’t need something big, I just need enough space for me and my little one.

I have to arrange a few viewings and then take it from there.

We wrap up and I make my way to the eatery. We are still going strong, so strong that I might extend our footprint soon. It would’ve

been so great if I had Muzi to guide me through this step but I guess I have to walk this path alone. I just need to find a business consultant to talk to see if this is something I can do.

The place is buzzing, as usual. This spot is perfect for this business. There are a couple of colleges around here as well as a few office buildings, which means we're always packed, no matter what. I wish this growth continues as we expand and increase our footprint.

I greet Joe before slipping to the back. I have a terribly comfortable office here. I say terrible because I hardly get any work done when I am here. It's that comfortable but I'm not complaining more especially now.

I don't have much to do, it seems. The books are looking good and are nodding at my desire to expand. I hope this works well. A knock comes through the door and Joe walks in.

“Sorry to disturb, you have someone here to see you.”

“Who is it?”

“He says his name is Mathonga.”

My heart drops into my stomach. Mathonga is here? What is he doing here? Oh goodness. Okay.

I clear my throat.

“You can let him in. Thanks, Joe.”

He walks in. Oh wow, he looks... healed. He doesn't have a cast on his leg anymore and you can hardly see the scratches on his face. But then again, those were just tiny marks.

“Hey,” he greets softly.

“Hi.”

I remain seated. The dress I'm wearing shows a bit of my bump but I'm wearing an oversized jacket on top of it, luckily. I don't know, for some reason I don't want him it. Thankfully, he takes a seat across the table.

“How are you?”

“I'm fine and you, Mathonga?”

“I'm good.” He draws in a breath. “I'm sorry. I'm sorry for being an ass the last time we were in the same room.”

“I understand.” And I'm not just saying that. I really do.

Sure, I wanted his reaction to be different but things ended on a sour note between us.

“You’re pregnant?”

“Yeah.”

“And it’s mine.”

“Yes. We can do a DNA test if you want to.”

“No, I mean, I know it’s risky doing on while the baby is still inside of you. Maybe once they’re born we can do that, not that I’m not taking your word for it but just to clear everything out.”

“I get you. We can do that.”

He nods. I’ve never been this awkward in his presence.

“How far along are you?”

“Five months.”

He runs his hands over his face.

“I’ve missed out on a lot. I’d like to be involved for the rest of the pregnancy. If you’d let me, I’d like to accompany you to every doctor’s appointment, I’d like to tend to all your cravings and everything in between. I want to be hands on.”

I wasn’t expecting this, so I’m damn

emotional. My eyes are glassy and I'm trying my best to keep the tears from falling.

"Uhm..."

There's a slight discomfort in my stomach. I think there's movement. I put my hand over my stomach and draw in a breath. Mathonga is next to me within a flash, squatting next to me.

"Are you okay?"

"I think the baby is moving or kicking or something."

He smiles. "May I?"

I nod. He puts his hand on my stomach and the movements go crazy.

"Whoah! Was it this intense?" he asks.

"Nope, I think he's just happy to be in dad's presence."

"It's a boy?"

"I don't know. I don't want to know; I want it to be a surprise."

"Would you mind if I found out?"

"No, just as long as you keep it to yourself."

"When is your next appointment?"

"I had one today, so in a few weeks."

He nods. His hand is still on my stomach, rubbing it.

“I’d like us to have a conversation. Do you mind coming over tonight?”

“Mathonga...”

I don’t know why I’m hesitating. I’ve been wanting and praying for this moment with him but now that it’s here, shucks! I’m scared of the outcome of this conversation but it must happen.

“I’ll cook,” he says with a smile.

He knows I can’t say no to his food.

“Fine. I’ll see you tonight.”

“Thank you.”

He rubs my stomach one last time before getting up.

“Do you have any cravings?”

“No, as long as it tastes good then I eat.”

“Perfect. Later.”

“Later.”

CHAPTER FORTY

The whole drive here was nerve wrecking. I never thought I would find going to Mathonga so frightening. But this is our reality and a completely different one will be formed after this conversation. There's only two options really; we either, agree to be strictly co-parents or we agree to work on us. I still pray for a chance with him. Selfish, maybe but I tasted love and life with him and I want that. I want more of him and us. The gate is already opened, I drive in and head into the house. It smells incredible. Mathonga and the kitchen are quite good friends.

“Hey, you made it. Come in.”

He ushers me further into the house, leading me towards the kitchen.

“Can I get you something to drink?” he asks.

“Juice please.”

“Coming right up.”

He pours two glasses of juice. I watch on as he grabs a platter from the oven and puts it on the counter in front of me. I’m not going to say no to free food. He hands me my juice then joins me.

I smile at how casual the setup is. I know we’re about to have a serious conversation but I’m glad he’s making it a bit less intense than it could be.

“So, your accident?” I break the ice.

“Drove over a cliff. I’m lucky to be alive.”

I turn to look at him in shock. Muzi just made it seem like it was a minor serious accident. Not this extreme.

“Anyway, uhm, I wanted to talk about us,” he says.

My heart leaps. Us?

“Okay...”

He heaves a sigh.

“Obviously I can’t forget about the fact that you and my father had a thing.”

“Do you want me to apologise for that again?” I ask.

I’ve apologised. I’ve begged and I’ve cried.

“No. But I just want you to know that it’s a heavy secret for me to carry. How do I continue loving you while I know that at some point my mother would’ve probably cried because of you?”

My world stops. I hear everything he’s saying and it’s valid. But...

“You love me?”

He chuckles. “Fucked up. I told you I saw a future with you and I had hoped the time away from you would help me forget about you but then the accident happened and you’re pregnant and I’ve learnt that life is too short to keep things bottled up.

I love you, Nkosazana. I loved you from the moment I laid my eyes on you. I knew that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with you. I don’t know how we’re going to make this world with this crazy dynamic. All I know is

that I don't want to be without you. If you'll have me, I'd like you to give me a chance. Just a chance to love you."

"I hear everything you're saying and it sounds cute but what happens when we're in the same room as your father and you remember that he's my ex? Are you going to be mad at me? Are we going to go back to where we were a few weeks ago?"

"Honestly, I don't know how I am going to react to the two of you in the same space. All I know is that I want to try with you. That's all I'm certain about at this moment."

I've waited for this moment for so long and now that it's here, I don't know. I want to give us a shot but I'm scared.

I feel his hand around my waist and his lips on my neck.

"It won't be perfect. But we can create some good memories and try to build something new. Clean slate. No lies. Everything on the table. What do you say? Be mine, Nkosazana. Let me love you..."

CHAPTER FORTY ONE

I'm under his sheets, in his shirt, in his arms. I think it's safe to say that we have made up. Last night after he asked me to be his and to give him another chance, I opened up about my fears and about how as much as I would love to be with him, I'm just scared off how we are going to navigate around our situation. But I really want to be with him and we are going to make this work.

Mathonga walks in a tray in his hands in nothing but his underwear. My mouth instantly salivates and not at the contents of

the tray. All we did was cuddle and talk and get reacquainted with each other. Last night reminded me of why choose him. This guy is different and soft and gentle and everything in between.

"Breakfast for my babies," he says putting the tray on the side table.

I bite my lower lip. I haven't had sex since the day he found me with his father so excuse me for being thirsty.

"I know that look."

"Then you should know what is about to go down."

He chuckles, leaning down to take my lips in his. I'm already dripping and ready for action. I don't want time wasting. He climbs onto the bed and I feel him knocking against my thigh.

"Baby..."

He places a kiss on my lips. He wastes no time sliding in. I suck in a breath as he stretches me out, finding comfort and warmth in his home.

"Fuck, I've missed you so much."

All I can do is moan my response. I've missed him too. I don't want to lie, he knows how to rock my body and make it sing like it was made just for him.

His thrusts are slow and controlled, making me vulnerable.

"Look at me," he whispers.

I open my eyes and look into his. I can't believe that this is us right now. I'm scared but I'm hopeful that we're going to make it. His eyes drill into mine, undressing me and seeing the deepest parts of me.

"I'm sorry," he says.

That invites my tears and I allow them to fall. He has nothing to apologise for but the fact that he is means so much to me. I appreciate that he's showing me that he really wants to be with me and raise a family together.

I hold onto him and cry out. It's both pleasure and relief. I'm happy and happily fucked down. He makes love to my body and my soul and I welcome it, thanking my lucky stars for this very moment.

I prayed and it was answered. That is all I

could've ever asked for. Nothing more.

Mathonga and I are cuddling in bed, with me reading his diary. After our morning session, I took a shower and then ate breakfast he made for me, which was delicious by the way. Once I was done, I took the time to look around his place. It's beautiful. It's decorated like his apartment, so you know his mother had a hand in it.

I came across the diary while I was looking around and he gave me permission to go through it but he insisted on being next to me as I did, so here we are.

"Dear diary,

That's how they start their diary entries, right? I met a girl tonight. Man, she's beautiful. That's all I can say about her. She's beautiful. She's breathtaking.

Her attitude is on steroids, it kind of turns me on. It's so weird that I'm attracted to her.

I usually don't go for women with spunk but her? She reels me in. I loved how she was so stubborn and refused to do what the hosts said. I admired her courage.

And then we got talking and I felt myself leaving earth and heading to a planet far away. There is no denying our attraction to each other. We have chemistry. I don't want to come off too strong but I don't think I can help myself.

She gave me her number and I plan on using them."

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I clear my throat after reading that entry and he laughs.

"You were a gone guy, huh?"

"What can I say, I was taken from first glance."

Oh I can definitely tell.

"Dear Diary

She was here, in my apartment, eating my food and laughing with me. Gosh, it felt like I had won the lottery. Heck, it felt better than that. Just being in her presence was everything I could've ever asked for.

I don't know but I have a feeling that we're going to be in each other's lives for a very long time. Well, that's what I hope for.

I can't wait to see her again."

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"Dear Diary

I tasted her lips and I know that I'm fucked! Yep! She has me and I am never escaping from under her spell. She could tell me to jump and I wouldn't even await further instruction.

I'm doomed but I like it."

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I can't believe my kiss had him going that crazy. I don't say anything but he knows I'm commenting internally.

"Dear Diary

I think I love her."

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"Dear Diary

Sorry, I know it's been a while since I jotted down my thoughts but I've kind of been preoccupied. As I write this I'm sitting in the car, in the parking lot while she's probably walking around the apartment in my shirt.

I invited her to Cape Town and she's here. I couldn't believe it when I saw her. I don't even have the words to express just how I feel. I hope this time spent with her will cement my place in her life.

I'm about to walk up there and give myself to

her. Wish me luck."

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"I told her I loved her. I couldn't hold it in anymore. I hope she chooses me."

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"Dear Diary

Forgive my manners in the previous entry I couldn't help myself."

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I laugh softly.

"I can't believe you're talking to your diary like that."

"They said express everything. Leave me alone hawu."

I will leave him be, only because I want to

read what else he has written in here.

"Dear Diary

I don't know how to do this but I feel like I need to talk to someone before I burst.

It's only been a day but I'm already losing my mind. I discovered something yesterday, something that will haunt me for the rest of my life. I discovered that my father and a woman who I am madly in love with are in a relationship, meaning that my father is cheating on my mother with someone old enough to be his daughter.

Yes, it's messed up. In fact, it's fucked up, excuse the language. It's eating me inside and I don't know how to deal with this.

When I kicked Nkosazana out, I felt a part of me break. A piece of my soul left me and I will never get it back. I don't think there will ever be a woman that will make me feel the way she did. In fact, I think I'll be off women for the rest of my life. It's a good thing I'm not a

vampire so I won't have to live with this pain forever.

Man, I love this girl. I love everything about her and I hate that I can't be with her. My love and loyalty to my mother outweigh what I feel for her.

Hopefully, I'll get through this hurt soon."

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“I’m sorry that you have to hide this from your mom,” I say.

He clears his throat.

“I have figured that it’s not my place to say anything but it’s hard because she’s my mother and I love the girl my father cheated on her with.”

I flinch. I know my relationship with Muzi was wrong but I never thought that I would be in this situation.

“I’m not making you feel bad,” he quickly adds in.

“I know but it’s still hard knowing that I was with him and ya. I’m sorry. I wish I had a do

over button.”

“Yeah. If only...”

I just hope Muzi won't throw his toys about this.

Anyway, back to reading.

"Dear Diary

Dad came to see me today. He looked like he'd been run over by a truck. I don't know if it's because he lost Nkosazana or because of the guilt of us sleeping with the same woman. I don't think I'll ever be able to get past this. And it's not even because we slept with the same woman but rather because he is cheating on my mother.

Anyway, he begged for my forgiveness and I told him I needed time. I don't think time will ever make me forget any of this, but it's worth the shot, right?

He also begged me not to tell my mother this which I was expecting. I had already decided that I was not going to mention any of this that's my mother why should I be the one to

break her heart? If anyone is going to tell her about anything and if anyone is going to break her heart, it is going to be her husband and not me."

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"How is your relationship with your dad?"

"Weird but that was expected. We'll see as time goes by."

Okay...

"Dear Diary

Today is a big day for Nkosazana. it's the grand opening of her eatery and it kills me that I'm not there for her. I can still hear her excitement and I can still see her animated look as she passionately tells me about the place. She has been looking forward to this for such a long time and I'm happy for her.

Obviously now I know that my father had a hand in helping her set this up but it's not even about that I'm just genuinely happy that

she gets to live out her dream.

You know I was supposed to help her out yesterday. The plan was that I would go to the spot with her yesterday and make sure that everything was ready for today.

I don't know how many times I've fought myself from calling her or even getting into the car and driving to her place. I feel it would be unfair on both of us because the truth is, we can't be together.

I love her with everything in me but my moral compass is too high for me to just forget about what I know.

If Mom wasn't in the picture I could probably get over the fact that my dad and I had the same woman. But my mother, I love her too much to bring someone that had a bit of her husband in her presence. It just wouldn't work.

Anyway, I hope the opening goes well. She deserves it."

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He was thinking about me? I'm shocked! I don't say anything. He kisses my head and pulls me closer.

"I never stopped loving you, even when I hated you," he says.

I don't know how to respond to that. I thought he hated me and wanted nothing to do with me. Wow. Sigh.

"Dear Diary

I went to her eatery today. A part of me was hoping I would get just a glimpse of her but she wasn't around. Her staff said she'd taken a couple of days off. I wanted to pick up the phone and ask her what was wrong I wanted to find out if she was okay but I fought against the urge and here I am, writing about it.

I wish I could say it gets easier with each passing day but it seems to be getting harder and harder. With each passing day, I miss her. I miss her tenderness. I miss her cheekiness. I even miss her poking me in the

*middle of the night just to annoy me.
I love like this only comes once in a lifetime
and to have tasted it for such a short space of
time only to lose it so abruptly kills me. "*

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"Dear Diary

*Do you think we could make it work? Do you
think my love for her outweighs everything?
I want to try with her. I want to make things
work. "*

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This was his last entry before his accident. So he was considering fixing things for months? "I told you, even when I hated you, you were the only thing on my mind. I know I will never find some like you and I don't want them because it's you, Nkosazana. You are the one for me."

“I love you, Mathonga. I love you so much and I promise to fight for us always.”

“I know, baby. Thank you for not giving up on us.”

“Thank you for forgiving me.”

I know it was easy for him and I appreciate the effort.

CHAPTER FORTY TWO

Part of fixing things means letting his family know. He knows that his parents know about the baby and now he wants us to tell them that we're together. I'm shaking out my boots but I can't stop this dinner from happening.

He takes my hand in his and kisses it. He knows I'm nervous about tonight; part of the reason being the fact that I haven't told me parents about this pregnancy and he wants to talk to his parents about them going to pay damages and lobola for the child. Yeah, he

wants him to use his surname. I don't mind. I'm just happy that he acknowledges that it's his and he wants to play an active role in every possible way.

“Are you okay?”

“I'm thinking about having to talk to my father. But I'll do it soon. I just don't want to leave it off for too long.”

“Would you be going home?”

“No, I'll talk to him over the phone. I don't have the strength to see them right now.”

“I'm sorry you're going through this

“It's okay. Life has a way of working itself out. I'm okay.”

I think I am. I will be. He kisses my finger tips before resting my hand on his thigh. He loves this. I love it too.

We drive into his parent's house and I draw in a deep breath. I haven't been here before, thank goodness. He opens the door for me and we make our way in. There's music playing in the background. The first thing we see is his parent's slow dancing.

The look on his face tells a tale of a man that loves his wife. She also looks happy. He leans in and places a kiss on her lips while she giggles. The whole scene doesn't make sense. I don't understand why he cheated on her but I guess I never will and that's okay.

"Kids in the house," Mathonga says.

They break apart and his mother smiles widely.

"My baby." She walks over to him and pulls him in for a tight squeeze.

The exchange makes me feel warm and fuzzy. It makes me miss my dad. She walks over to me and also pulls me in for a warm embrace.

"You look so beautiful." She pulls back and looks at my stomach. "May I?"

I'm slightly awkward but I nod. She puts her hand on my stomach and smiles brightly.

"Make your own baby, mom."

She laughs and turns to hit him on the shoulder.

"If only I could."

My heart sinks. I know her husband had a vasectomy and I also know the story Mathonga told me. It's sad that she couldn't experience the feeling of pregnancy again. Maybe this baby will help her get over whatever she's going through.

“Nkosazana, you remember Mathonga's father, right?”

I nod. “Yes I do, lovely seeing you again, baba.”

I almost laugh at that. I used to call him daddy and now we're all Zulu about it. Life.

Mathonga gives his father a look that I can't even understand; his father also returns it. Okay... they're being hostile towards each other and it's awkward. I can see his mom is confused but she brushes it off.

I'm over being here already. Mathonga asks to talk to his father alone and they walk off.

“These two are always fighting about something, it's tiring. Anyway, so how far along are you?”

“Five months.”

“Wow. So we need to go to your family soon before you’re heavily pregnant.”

“Yes, Mathonga and I were talking about that on our way here actually. I just need to tell my parents first.”

“They don’t know you’re pregnant?”

“Not yet.”

“Are you scared? Do you need us to talk to them on your behalf?”

My heart sinks. She’s such an amazing, sweet soul. I hope her husband has stopped with his ways.

“We were going through something. You know how it is.”

“Ahh, like those two, I get it. I hope you fix your issues. They need to be part of this child’s life. Oh my goodness, I’m so excited, I never thought Mathonga would ever have a child. I had given up hope. Thank you for making me a grandmother. I hope this isn’t the last grandchild you two will give me.”

I laugh. What if we break up?

“My son loves you, he will fight for your love.”

Ah shit, that thing of speaking my thoughts unaware. I hate it. I just smile and shake my head. Thankfully they come back and join us. I can see Mathonga is angry but he's trying for his mother's sake. I won't ask him now.

We spend the evening with more chatter between his mother and I. Muzi only answers when spoken to and all Mathonga does is rub my stomach and kiss my cheek. By the end of dessert he asks for us to be excused.

His mom understands and even packs some food for us. We say our goodbyes and head out.

“What happened?” I ask when we get to the car.

“I just realised that I love you and I will fight everything and everyone that stands in our way including my own father.”

“What did he say?”

“It's not important.”

“Don't do that. Don't shut me out. Khuluma nami.”

He sighs. “My father loves you. He didn't have to say it but I saw it.”

My heart beats out of my chest.

“But I love you and that’s all that matters. Forget about Muzi and his power trip and bruised ego. He doesn’t love me, he’s just being an ass.”

“Nkosa-”

“I won’t lose you twice. Focus on us and forget about your father. Please.”

He smiles faintly.

“You’re right.”

“I know I am.”

“Us against the world?”

“Until the heavens open. I love you, Mathonga.”

“I love you too, Nkosazana.”

“And that’s all that matters.”

EPILOGUE

"Dada," he screams, excitedly.

I smile, "Yes, that's your dad, baby."

I place a kiss on his wet lips. Gosh, the frame in his hand is soaking with his saliva. He repeatedly kisses the picture while giggling.

The innocence of a child, so beautiful! I wish I could go back to my child-like state and just forget about everything. Boy, wouldn't that help me!

I love this little human being with everything in me. I would trek to hell and back barefooted for him.

Nkosenhle turned two yesterday. With each passing day, he looks like Mathonga and it freaks me out so much. I had hoped that I

would feature in a bit but who am I to fight nature and God?

There's a knock at the door - Muzi is here. He's picking Nkosenhle up for the weekend.

"How are you?"

"Good and you?"

"You sure you're good? Do you need anything?"

This is how all our conversations go. You'd swear we're strangers but I guess that's how things should be. He is my son's grandfather and that's it.

I smile, "I'm good."

He sends me money still. I told him to stop but he refuses to and I hate it.

"Okay." He nods.

Awkward.

I know he wants to say something but he knows I'll shut him down. But I need to talk about the money.

"Muzi, I need you to stop sending me money. I've spoken to you about this and I need you to respect my decision. I don't want to have to involve Mathonga in this."

“I’m giving you money for my grandson, it’s not my fault that you use it on yourself.”

Nkosenhle comes running in and launches himself at his grandfather. He catches him and spins him around while tickling him. My little man laughs loudly, begging his grandfather to stop. They have a heartwarming relationship.

“Who is my big-little man?” Muzi asks with a proud smile on his face.

They came through yesterday to wish him a happy birthday. They could’ve taken him with them when they left but I needed to spend some time with him considering that I’ll be away for a week or two. ZEE’s is expanding and I am so excited. So grateful.

We have been doing amazing. We’ve been featured in a couple of magazines, we’ve hosted lunches and dinners for prominent public figures. We’ve also been figured on Style Trends, which is a current lifestyle show with over a million viewers. All these features and events have created a demand and well, give the people what they want!

We're launching our Cape Town branch soon and I need to be there to oversee everything. I think I choose Cape Town because it reminds me of Mathonga and all the memories we created there.

The door opens and my Mathonga comes walking in with a bouquet of roses in his hand. My son wiggles out of his grandfathers hold and runs to his father. These two are best friends and there is no denying that. He loves his dad more than he loves me and I've made peace with that.

"My man!"

"My man!"

He kisses him all over his face and roughs out his hair. Nkosenhle refuses to cut his hair because his father also has hair. I'm not getting involved.

"Grandpa here," he says.

"I see him, my boy. Sup pops."

"I'm good and you?"

"Great. Hey, baby," he comes over and pulls me for a kiss.

His son squeals, as usual. The kiss carries on

longer than it should have. He's putting on a show for his father. You would think that after two years things would be better between them but they're not. Mathonga tries but Muzi acts like an ass sometimes, which is why I don't want to involve Mathonga on this issue of his father sending me money. That would be adding fuel to the fire.

"I thought mom was going to fetch him," Mathonga says.

"She had a meeting to attend. I'll pick her up on our way back home."

"I see. Okay, boy you're going to visit grandpa."

"Yes! And Mama."

He chuckles. "Yes, and Mama. Are you going to miss Dada?"

"Noooooooooooo!"

We all burst into laughter. He never misses us when he's that side because his grandmother spoils him like crazy. Not that we're complaining, I don't miss him when he's gone because I get to have time with my big

baby.

“Okay, let’s go. Say bye mommy.”

“Bye mommy.”

I give him a kiss before he runs off, following his grandfather. Mathonga walks them out. When he comes back in, he pulls me in for a tight squeeze.

Sigh.

It’s been an amazing two and a half years with this man. I’ve laughed and loved so hard that has made my heart so full. He loves me. We love each other and we treat each other so well. I’ve never felt like this before and I pray it never changes.

“You missed me?” he asks.

“So so much and I’m still going to miss you.”

He grunts. “Take me with you.”

“Your son?”

“His grandparents will take care of him.”

I laugh. As much as he loves them and enjoys going to them, he loves coming home and him coming back to just one parent is better than zero.

“I’ll be back before you know it.”

“Argh, I love you.”

I smile. “I know.”

“You suck.”

“You wish I would suck you right now.”

“Pretty please,” he kisses me.

I laugh.

“Let’s go give you some head as well as some juicy bits.”

He picks me up and throws me over his shoulder. Oh my goodness! Ever so eager! I love it here.